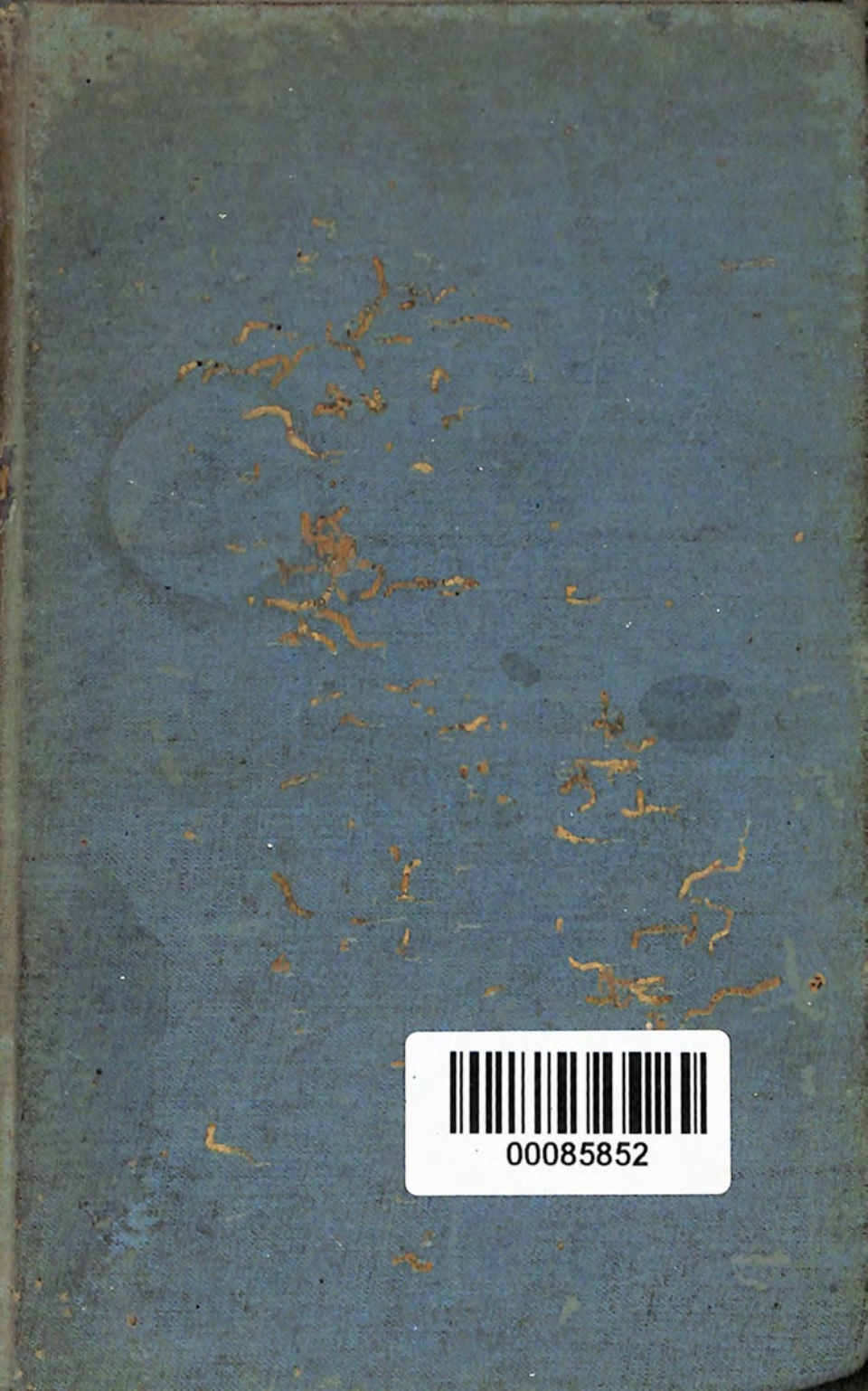
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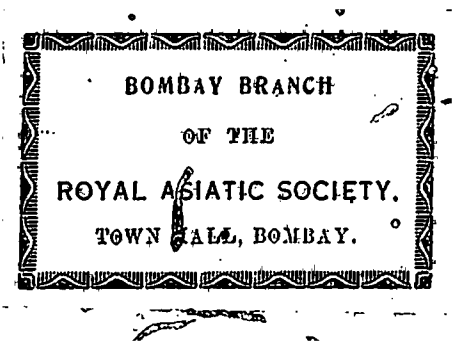

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MOUNT SINAÏ, from the TÓR ROAD.

TRAVELS IN ARABIA;

BY

85852

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SINAI; SURVEY OF THE GULF OF AKABAH; COASTS OF ARABIA AND NUBIA,

&c. &c. &c.

Z-C-16

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London, John Murray, 1838.

TRAVELS

IN

THE PROVINCE OF OMÁN,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM TÓR TO SUEZ*.

Origin of the Survey of the Shores of the Red Sea—Sir Home Popham—Captain Court—Defects of the Old Maps—Wrecks in the Arabian Gulf—Historical Reminiscences of the Red Sea—Journey from Tór to Suez—Description of Tór—Malam Nicoli—Environs—El Wádi—Priest of Mount Sinaï—Impregnation of the Date Palm—Mohammed Ali—Baths of Moses, their Waters—Dr. Shaw—Sir Frederick Henniker—Excursion to the Jebel Makateb, or Written Mountain—Niebuhr—Haunted Caves—Anecdote of the Bedowins—Abu Soowarah—Inscriptions.

In 1829, the Bombay government, in pursuance of orders from the Court of Directors, relative to the establishment of a steam communication between India and Europe, directed that two vessels should be despatched to complete a survey of the Red Sea. The Benares and Palinurus were selected for this

* Properly Suweïs, *i. e.*, "the little mouth."

commenced her survey at Suez, and completed on the Egyptian shores, to Cape Nose, when she returned to Bombay to refit; and on October the 12th, 1830, I was appointed to her, and we sailed to complete her remaining portion of the sea.

In narrating the leading occurrences of this expedition, I shall confine myself to remarks on the nature and general features of the country, and information connected with the inhabitants, which my several journeys have enabled me to obtain, leaving such remarks as are addressed exclusively to the mariner to the sailing directions: proceedings or incidents connected with our progress from station to station, will also, unless in obvious cases, be omitted.

After a tedious passage from India, we entered the Straits of Jabal, and few countries present themselves to the imagination of the traveller under circumstances so well calculated to awaken a deep and lasting interest, as those around us. From the earliest dawn of history, the northern shores of the Red Sea have figured as the scene of events which both religious and civil records have united to

render memorable. Here Moses and the Patriarchs tended their flocks, and put in motion those springs of civilization which, from that period, have never ceased to urge forward the whole human race in the career of improvement. On one hand, the valley of the Wanderings, commencing near the site of Memphis, and opening upon the Red Sea, conducts the fancy along the track pursued by the Hebrews during their flight out of Egypt; on the other hand, are, Mount Sinaï, bearing still upon its face the impress of miraculous events; and, beyond it, that strange, stormy, and gloomy-looking sea, once frequented by Phœnician merchants' ships, by the fleets of Solomon and Pharaoh, and those barks of later times, which bore the incenses, the gems, the gold and spices of the East, to be consumed, or lavishly squandered upon favourites at the courts of Macedonia or Rome. But the countries lying along this offshoot of the Indian Ocean have another kind of interest peculiar perhaps to themselves: on the Arabian side we find society much what it was four thousand years ago, for amidst the children of Ishmael it has undergone but trifling modifications. Their tents

are neither better nor worse than they were when they purchased Joseph of his brethren on their way to Egypt; the Sheïkhs possess no other power or influence than they enjoyed then; the relations of the sexes have suffered little or no changes; they eat, drink, clothe themselves, educate their children, make war and peace, just as they did in the day of the Exodus. But on the opposite shores all has been change, fluctuation, and decay. While the Bedowins have wandered with their camels and their flocks, unaspiring, unimproving, they have looked across the gulf and beheld the Egyptian overthrown by the Persian; the Persian by the Greek; the Greek by the Roman; and the Roman in his turn by a daring band from their own burning deserts. They have seen empires grow up like Jonah's gourd. War has swept away some, the vanities and luxuries of peace have undermined and brought others to the ground; and every spot along these shores is celebrated. Glance your eye along the map—take your stand on the Posidian promontory, and look towards the right and towards the left; can you anywhere, save in Greece, find clustered together so many names embalmed

by history? Eastward, beyond the Ælanatic Gulf, is the country of the Nabathei and Sideri; to the north is Esian geber and Elana, and Hor, and Petra, and Mount Seir and Szoar, even to the shores of the sea of Sodom; and in the small desert peninsula of Sinaï, which I was now about to traverse, how many are the spots where fancy loves to linger! Have we not the dwelling-place of the Maranitæ, Dizahab, and Phænicon, Raphidim and Horeb, and Pharan, with the black mountains looking towards Idumea? The sea also, in those parts, is crowded with islands, each of which has its ancient legend. On one little rock, the name of Zeus confers a degree of glory. Close at hand is the island of the Phocæ, or seals; where, if we might transfer a poetical tradition, we may suppose Menelaus to have lain in wait for Proteus. At no great distance, is the island of Saspereus, which served as a beacon to the merchant ships making towards Arsinoe, in the Hieropolitan Gulf; and yonder, on the western shore, is Myos Hormus, or the Harbour of the Mouse, celebrated in the Periplus, and the History of Roman Commerce. Along that

same coast, where now the Ababdi and Mahazi pitch their tents, the Icthyophagi, described by Agatharchides, were found. But it would be endless to enumerate the places, or to allude to the circumstances, which combine to cast a spell over the shores of the Red Sea; I shall therefore proceed to other subjects.

A few days after our arrival at the Straits, a continuation of tempestuous weather compelled us to put into Tór for shelter; and it was arranged there, that I should proceed overland to Suez, with the dispatches intrusted to our charge.

Owing to the security of its harbours, and the excellent water obtained in its vicinity, Tór is much frequented by ships and boats proceeding to or returning from Suez. Its position, as the nearest port to the entrance of the Straits of Jabal, is also advantageous; and we find, in consequence, that it attracted the attention of the early Portuguese navigators, who, under Don Juan de Castro, took possession of and fortified it. Of these works nothing now remains; but the ruins of a small castle, constructed at nearly the same period

by Sooltan Selim, may still be observed at a short distance to the southward of the town. During the invasion of Egypt in 1800, the French had some intention of forming an outpost here; but their stay in the country was too brief to allow of their carrying that design into effect.

Tór* at present consists of two villages, one of which, now completely fallen to decay, was formerly inhabited by the Arabs; the other, only a few yards distant, styled Beled el Naisar, or the Christian Town, contains about forty wretched houses, occupied by a few families of Greek Christians, whose principal support is derived from furnishing the Hajj boats† with supplies; a few employ

* Sir Home Popham remarks that camels may be obtained here to proceed to Suez in three days: a Bedowin, carrying despatches on a fleet dromedary, will do so; but the distance is one hundred and eighty miles, and too long, as will be seen from my narrative, to be performed in that time, without greater fatigue than most travellers would be desirous of encountering without some urgent cause.

† In various parts of the world, I have often, as a general remark, had occasion to observe that, however unsightly or inconsistent with European ideas may be the form and construction of their several boats, yet, upon examination and reflection, we shall find them best adapted to surmount the local difficulties which they may have to encounter. I cannot, however, extend this

themselves also in fishing, while others obtain a scanty subsistence by collecting and disposing of petroleum from the wells of Zeeté, on the Egyptian shore. All are, however, miserably poor.

Though situated on a gentle eminence, the air of the town is very close and sultry; for the advantage of its elevated position is more than counteracted by an extensive tract of marshy ground extending to the northward, and also by the glare of a sandy plain, rising with a gradual slope to the seaward front of the mountain ranges. If we except one small square building dignified by the name of a chapel, and decorated with a few miserable pictures, there is nothing in Tór to interest the traveller. The native dwellings are of the meanest description; the rooms being

observation to the Red Sea: the same fragile and misshapen bark, which has probably from the very earliest period traversed its tempestuous bosom, is still—and with better models before them—in general use; and their inability to encounter the prevailing north-westerly breezes, against which a vessel possessing moderate sailing qualities would be able to make good way (the Palinurus, the vessel to which I was attached, was a perfect tub), may be inferred from the circumstance of our finding several vessels here, which, rather than encounter them, had remained from three to six weeks at anchor in the harbour.

dark and filthy, without furniture, and infested with fleas and other vermin. Visitors arriving here on their route to Mount Sinaï usually lodge at a house belonging to Malam Nicoli, who certainly deserves the several testimonials he has received for civility and honesty; but I would, nevertheless, for the reasons I have given, recommend those detained here who can obtain materials for constructing a tent, however rude, to give the preference to El Wádí, where the air is purer and the shade of the trees extremely grateful.

There are several objects of interest in the vicinity of Tór, and we will first look at El Wádí, "the Valley." It is situated in a north-westerly direction, about a mile from Tór, at the termination of the marshy tract I have before noticed. It is shallow, about two miles in length, abounding in water, and occupied by numerous groves of date-trees, one of the most extensive of which belongs to the monastery of Sinaï, and a monk constantly resides there as its guardian. At the period of our visit we found an old priest, seventy years of age, who had fulfilled that duty for forty years. His habitation was a small

square tower, erected in one corner of the garden, inaccessible except by means of a ladder, which, when retiring to his retreat in less tranquil times, he drew up after him. A hale and ruddy complexion, with a snow-white beard, contributed to render the whole appearance of this venerable man exceedingly patriarchal; and, in describing to me the various avocations to which, in order to avert the tedium of his solitary situation, he had had recourse, he observed that the constant labour thus entailed on him had rendered his long sojourn in the wilderness a scene of tranquil retirement.

The date-trees growing in El Wádí exhibit a luxuriance of vegetation I have seldom observed elsewhere. It was interesting to observe, that here the Arabs still retain the ancient practice of impregnating the female plant by means of fastening a bunch of the male seed on a branch exposed to strong winds, which disseminate it over the blossoms. Their adherence to this primitive custom here is singular, since in other parts of the East the same result has long been discovered to be effected by planting a

single male amidst several female date-trees. My old friend the priest related to me that in former years no portion of this garden, beyond what was necessary for his own support, escaped the rapacity of the Bedowins; but, awed by the influence of Mohammed Ali, who has proved himself a good friend to the monks, they are now satisfied with a certain quantity which is furnished them annually; the remainder, disposed of at Cairo, yielding, it is said, an annual revenue of four thousand dollars.

On the eastern side of the garden, under the shade of its palms, is situated the Hummum Músá, or "Bath of Moses." The traditions of the country assert this to be Elim, where Moses and his household encamped. Some intelligent travellers who visited the country around Tór, have also satisfied themselves with this identification; but, notwithstanding such high authority, I must avow my scepticism; for if, as is generally supposed, the Israelites crossed at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, what brought them so far south, and out of their route to Sinaï, as Tór? Not its wells and water, since

Wádí Feiran, nearer and directly in the line of their march, affords an abundance of both. But this subject will be more fully discussed at the conclusion of the present narrative.

The Haji, or Mohammedan pilgrims, proceeding to or returning from Mecca, give implicit credence to the tradition, and believe its waters to be efficacious in removing cutaneous and other topical disorders. So little attention was however paid to its condition, that we found its roof had fallen in and nearly choked up the fountain. The water is beautifully clear, but it has a slight sulphureous smell, with a strong saline and bitter taste. On immersing a Fahrenheit's thermometer, it rose to 86°, which indicates that the temperature is not greater than that of the atmosphere here during summer.

In the vicinity of the Bath there are some remains of rudely-constructed buildings, which most probably served as habitations to those whom the reputation of its waters attracted thither. The valley, in the vicinity of the fountain, otherwise abounds in water, and there are some large pools a few yards to the southward of it. Its quality is, however, so

indifferent, that it is merely used for the purposes of irrigation, or for their camels. Dr. Shaw's opinion that the natives suffer from drinking there is incorrect. They draw their supply from some wells which are nearer to Tór, from which the shipping is also furnished. It is curious that both Dr. Shaw and Sir Frederick Henniker specify the number of wells at El Wádí,—the one at nine, and the other at twelve, though it is very certain there are no regular wells there at all. El Wádí is the bed of a mountain torrent; and when this becomes swollen from heavy rain, or the melting of the snow in elevated regions amidst the mountains, it forms a stream of some magnitude, which, in 1832, destroyed several of the trees, and caused considerable damage. It rose to the height of five feet above the level of the valley, and left, after the torrent had subsided, an alluvial deposit a foot in thickness. By digging, at any subsequent period, to the depth of two or three feet, water soon lodged in the hollow; but the number and position of these, either from the rush of the waters, or the deposition of mud and sand, may be entirely changed during the course of a single season.

After an interesting examination of the vicinity of Tór, I proceeded to visit the Jebel Makateb, or Written Mountain, concerning which the learned have so long been divided in opinion. Inscriptions are found in many other parts of the peninsula, but in no part which I have visited, are they so numerous as on this mountain. Yet I am not aware that any description has been published, or facsimiles of its writings been transmitted to Europe. Whilst Niebuhr resided at Cairo, he made a separate journey to effect this purpose; but his guide mistook the object of his inquiries, and conducted him to the sepulchral monuments of Sarbout el Kadam, so that he returned without being able to accomplish it. As the cliffs in the vicinity rise abruptly from the sea, and the neighbouring valleys are wholly destitute of pasturage, it was not without some difficulty that I could obtain a person at Tór to conduct me thither.

Quitting Tór, we continued our route on foot along the face of the Jebel Heman chain, here about 250 feet in height. The path was so narrow, that in some places we scrambled over it with difficulty; and the sea, then agitated

by a strong north-wester, was constantly jutting its spray over us. The shore was bold, and but a few yards from it, just without the curl of the surf, a group of porpoises held their sportive course. A great variety of other fish, of the most brilliant and beautiful hues, were also playing about; their different shades of orange, yellow, and purple, receiving an additional beauty from the deep blue tinge of the element through which they are viewed. Amidst many varieties unknown to me, I recognised several which are common to the reefs in other parts of the Red Sea, the most remarkable being the Scorpæna Miles; the Acanthus, most gorgeously streaked with purple and orange; the Chætoden; the Balistes Aculeatus Vardis; and several others of the Branchiostigasis order. A similar splendour and variety of colouring also extends to the masses of coral strewn over a clear bottom of pure white sands. In one spot, they are of a dead white, or livid purple; in another, of a bright yellow or crimson, and otherwise fancifully diversified.

About three miles from Tór, we arrived at some cells or grottos hewn out of the rock,

which appear to have been occupied at some early period by monks or other ascetics, who devoted themselves to a life of solitude and self-denial. They mostly consist of two rooms, each eight feet long, and in breadth and height about seven feet. The walls have been excavated with much care, and several bear inscriptions in modern Greek—one as early as 1603. One of these cells, somewhat larger than the rest, would seem to have been originally used as a chapel.

I learned from the priest at Tór that not less than 200 recluses formerly resided in this part, but that the continued ill-treatment of the Bedowins obliged them eventually to seek shelter within the walls of their convent at Sinaï. After the period when the Empress Helena, in the fourth century, set the example of proceeding on a pilgrimage to Mount Sinaï, vast numbers of hermits resorted to the peninsula, and made it their permanent residence. Traces of them are found in several other parts, though I believe none are at present found there.

Observing that no Bedowins had taken up their residence in these caverns, I became

desirous of ascertaining the reason; and, in answer to my inquiries, was assured that they were the abode of spirits. At first those with whom we were conversing could not be persuaded that we designed to pass the night there; but when we had spread our carpets within, and made the usual preparations for that purpose, they endeavoured to excite our fears by narrating the misfortunes of those whom rashness or ill-luck had brought after dark to their vicinity; but, finding their arguments unavailing, before the sun had set, we found ourselves deserted by the whole party. In the morning, it was discovered that no other interruption to our slumbers had occurred beyond the passing of a snake, probably attracted by our fire, over the face of one of the party; and when our Arab friends rejoined us, and discovered this to be the case, they, without hesitation, referred our escape to an alliance with the supernatural tenants of these rocky retreats, and thus furnished themselves with a satisfactory elucidation of our eagerness to pass the night within them. I was much amused at the eagerness with which they disputed all our assigned motives after

they had fixed on this; and I have no doubt that any traveller who may hereafter visit them, will be supposed to do so for a similar purpose.

Leaving the caves to the right, in a few minutes we arrived at a small date grove, called Ab'ú Suwará, situated within a few yards of the beach, which here recedes into a small bay. Amidst the trees, but a few yards from the shore, there is a well of very brackish water. Pursuing the chain of El Hemau, which here retires about 200 yards from the beach, at the termination of an hour's brisk walking, we arrived at Jebel Mokatteb, situated at the extremity of another small bay, about a mile in depth. That portion looking towards the sea is covered with inscriptions, differing in some respects from those found in other parts of the peninsula. They have, as is there common, neither the rude figures of animals, nor have they the prefatory sign attached to them. Intermixed with the more ancient inscriptions, there are many in Greek, Cufic, and more modern Arabic. These latter merely record the names and date of the several visitors; and the figure of the cross is

frequently appended to the inscriptions in Greek. In some other respects, also, the inscriptions on the Jebel Mokatteb are dissimilar to those found in other parts. Instead of being rudely scratched upon the face of the rock, many of them exhibit proofs of having been executed with tolerable care, and the lines along which they are drawn are all placed horizontally; and several which appear to have been executed at the same period had evidently much labour bestowed upon them.

These inscriptions have given rise to much interesting discussion. When conjecture assigned them to the Israelites during their wanderings, it was hoped that their decipherment might elucidate many unexplained portions of holy writ; and so sanguine were the expectations in England at one period on this head, that Bishop Clayton offered a reward of five hundred pounds to any person who would proceed to this mountain and copy them. No success has hitherto attended the labours of those who have looked over fac-similes of such as were brought from other parts of the peninsula. It has been suggested they are of Phœ-

nician origin; and, upon comparing some I happened to have with me at Malta with those found on the celebrated inscription on the island in that character, a very close resemblance in most of the letters could be traced.

CHAPTER II.

Mountain of the Bell—Remarkable Phenomenon connected with it—Return to Tór—Start for Suez—Desolate Scenery—Night on the Desert—Mount Serbal—Mirage—Daybreak in the East—Ras Selima—Arab Freedom of Manners—Well of Pharaoh—Excessive Heat—An Alarm—Endurance of the Camel—Marah—Fountain of Moses—Arrival at Suez—Passage of the Israelites.

In the same chain of El Heman, and at an equal distance from the sea as the Jebel Mokatteb, from whence, in a north-west direction, it is distant about a quarter of a mile, stands the Jebel Narkous, or "Mountain of the Bell." Considerable attention has also of late years been directed towards the phenomenon connected with this remarkable spot, though the accounts hitherto furnished by travellers are neither so full nor so satisfactory as could be wished. It forms one of a ridge of low calcareous hills, at a distance of three miles and a half from the beach, to which a sandy plain, extending with a gentle

rise to their base, connects them. Its height, about four hundred feet, as well as the material of which it is composed—a light-coloured friable sandstone—is about the same as the rest of the chain; but an inclined plane of almost impalpable sand rises at an angle of 40° with the horizon, and is bounded by a semicircle of rocks presenting broken, abrupt, and pinnacled forms, and extending to the base of this remarkable hill. Although their shape and arrangement in some respects may be said to resemble a whispering gallery, yet I determined by experiment that their irregular surface renders them but ill adapted for the production of an echo. Seated on a rock at the base of the sloping eminence, I directed one of the Bedowins to ascend, and it was not until he had reached some distance that I perceived the sand in motion, rolling down the hill to the depth of a foot. It did not however descend in one continued stream, but, as the Arab scrambled upwards, it spread out laterally and upwards, until a considerable portion of the surface was in motion. At their commencement the sounds might be compared to the faint strains of an Eolian

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harp when its strings first catch the breeze: as the sand became more violently agitated, by the increased velocity of the descent, the noise more nearly resembled that produced by drawing the moistened fingers over glass. As it reached the base the reverberations attained the loudness of distant thunder, causing the rock on which we were seated to vibrate; and our camels, animals not easily frightened, became so alarmed, that it was with difficulty their drivers could retain them.

It is particularly worthy of remark, that the noise did not issue from every part of the hill alike, the loudest being produced by disturbing the sand on the northern side about twenty feet from the base, and about ten from the rocks which bound it in that direction. The sounds sometimes fell quicker on the ear, at other times were more prolonged; but this swelling or sinking appeared to depend upon the Arab's increasing or retarding the velocity of his descent. On a spot so desert and solitary they have an inconceivably melancholy effect, and the Bedowins trace them to several wild and fanciful causes: the tradition given by Burckhardt, that the

bells belonging to the convent have been buried here, has often been repeated to me.

When I visited the Jebel Narkous on two other occasions the results were much less satisfactory. The first time the sounds were barely audible, and, rain having fallen a short time previous to my second visit, the surface of the sand was so consolidated by the moisture, that they could not be produced at all. I therefore attribute the complete gratification of my curiosity in this instance to the sand being perfectly dry, and consequently larger quantities rolling down the hill. That the explanation of this phenomenon is intimately connected with the agitation thus produced can admit of no doubt; but the precise causes which lead to these results it seems difficult to explain. It may be broadly stated that the particles of sand, when in motion, roll over a harder bed, and meet in their progress the wind then blowing directly on the face of the hill at a certain angle. I should mention that the same sounds are produced when the wind is sufficiently high to set the sand in motion; but I reject, without hesitation, the generally-received opi-

nion that the effects I have described are originated by this sand falling into cavities. Sounds thus produced would be dull and wholly deficient in the vibrations which I have noticed.

On my return to Tór I found that camels in my absence had been prepared for me, and, having halted to fill our water-skins from the pools at El Wádí, where our camels were also permitted to drink for the only time during the journey, on the evening of the 26th of January, 1830, I mounted and set forward for Suez. As there was little of interest on the road, and I was charged with dispatches, celerity was the principal object I had in view; and my Bedowins, in consideration of a few additional dollars, and full permission to regulate our movements, consented to accomplish the journey within three days.

I have already noticed that on the sea-side from Tór to Jebel Narkous there is merely a foot-path impracticable to camels. This extends to Rás Jihán; and on quitting El Wádí at five P.M. our route continued for one hour along a narrow valley enclosed by hills of moderate height. Accustomed as had been

my eyes to the peculiarities of desert scenery, the whole of the space we had quitted struck me as being singularly barren and desolate. A stratum of small dark stones, by which all the nearer, as well as the more remote, hills were thickly covered, gave them the appearance of huge piles of black and frowning crags. No trace of vegetation—not a blade of grass—was visible; even the common desert shrubs nowhere grew in this vicinity.

Emerging from this scene of desolation towards sunset, we entered upon a plain called El Kaa, which is separated from the sea by the chain of El Heman, and rises with a gentle acclivity on the other hand until it meets the first undulations of the hills which form the roots of Jebel Serbál. Its rugged and pinnacled summit was now receiving the last golden tints from the setting sun, but all below was enveloped in the evening's gloom. A fine moonlight night enabled us to travel until twelve o'clock: we then halted, and the Bedowins dispersed to collect from the shrubs which grew in detached patches around us a sufficiency of fuel for the night. It is erroneously concluded that the Bedowins are

abstemious from choice; I never saw them refuse good cheer when it offered itself. I had a good practical illustration of this remark here. The guides I had with me had accompanied some of my brother officers on a previous occasion to Mount Sinaï, and had shared in those goods of this life which our worthy countrymen rarely, save from necessity, will consent to relinquish. In the expectation of similar treatment they had manifested much readiness to accompany me; but, on witnessing my scanty store, and being told they would be left to their own resources, they one and all threatened to leave me on the morrow. It was not without considerable persuasion, backed by a large portion of a flask of brandy, that I succeeded in restoring them to good humour. Their food during the rest of the journey consisted of a few beans shared twice a-day with their camels; water, and that sparingly, was not taken oftener.

It cannot have escaped the notice of travellers that these men, often noisy, insolent, and troublesome previous to setting out, generally become as remarkable for civility and willing-

ness to oblige when once they are fairly embarked in the journey. When they had lighted their fire, and had seated themselves around, they soon lost all recollection of their first disappointment, and, while sipping their brandy, listened with much interest to the tales of one of their number—a dwarf—whose exertions, aided by a hunch-back, crooked legs, and most coarse features, were rewarded by repeated peals of laughter from his listeners. Although but sparingly clad, they appeared to suffer but little from the weather, and were highly amused at an expedient I had recourse to to shelter myself from it. A boat-cloak was all I had to serve as bedding; and, to make the most of that, I dug a hollow in the sand, and covered my garment over me. My contrivance shielded me, however, but little from the cold during the night, which, towards the approach of morning, became intense. I remark that all travellers who have crossed this part of the Desert in the winter months describe the same severity of weather: for my own part, being wholly unable to sleep, I amused myself with observing my Bedowin friends. When the others at

length retired to rest, the chief Hamed contrived to possess himself of a comfortable berth by clearing away the embers from the spot where the fire had been burning: he then removed the soil to the depth of a few inches, and laid himself down in the hollow.

At daylight January 27th we pursued our journey along El Kaá. Mount Serbal, with dark craggy summit, was still visible, proudly elevated above the surrounding peaks. This was once a place of pilgrimage, and some authors have even considered it to be Mount Sinaï.

During the early part of the day we several times beheld the phenomenon of the mirage, or false water of the Desert. Its resemblance to a diminutive lake was certainly very striking, since it not only reflected the bushes on its margin, but had also something of the ripple of water, and was streaked by those narrow shining patches of light observable on the surface of lakes when viewed from a distance. In some instances the opening between the false object and the true one must have amounted to nearly two degrees.

Towards noon we found that the hills on the eastern side approached nearer to the sea-shore, and El Kaá consequently became more contracted in its dimensions. Hence I passed over many successive plains, intersected in all directions by the beds of torrents which cross them in their progress from the mountains to the sea.

In the evening, leaving the entrance of Wádí Feiran to the right, we shortly afterwards reached the coast near Rás Sheratrib, about nine miles from Rás Jihan. The road now lay along the coast, over a beach principally composed of calcareous matter, consisting of an indiscriminate mixture of lime, coral, and shells, and forming a broad rocky platform, which extends from nearly midway between high and low-water mark to a considerable distance into the sea.

At one o'clock, the moon having disappeared behind the hills on the Egyptian shore, I halted for the night under a low bushy point called Rás Burdas.

Jan. 28*th*. Early this morning I resumed my journey. Mount Agarib, and the eminences to the southward on the Egyptian shore, pre-

sented at daybreak one of the most magnificent spectacles that can be conceived. While their summits were clothed with that golden hue which elevated mountains receive from the sun before his beams have warmed objects of less altitude, the lower ranges appeared enveloped in light purple haze, which shed over them an indescribable brilliancy. The atmosphere was keen, pure, and invigorating; and the sea, then agitated by a brisk north-westerly breeze, resembled some broad and noble stream bounded on either side by stupendous mountains: but neither forests nor clustering vegetation gird their sides; no streamlet or waterfall glistens out from their frowning surface: they stand in unclothed and naked majesty.

The road here passes within a few yards of the sea, at the base of hills composed of yellow and reddish-coloured sandstone. A continuation of strong north-westerly breezes had covered their surfaces with a layer of sand to a considerable height, and many of the ravines fronting the sea were entirely filled with it. In other places the wind had worn away the softer portions of the cliff, and left there large

hollows. Other parts, more compact, were left, but partially degraded, assuming the form, and apparently answering the purposes of pillars. At nine hours, at a distance of about ten miles from Rás Burdas, I passed a low sandy point called Rás Silima, which projects out to a considerable distance, and affords shelter to several native vessels then at anchor under it.

Whilst halting here for a few minutes, one of our guides discovered that his camel had been galled by the ropes which secured its saddle. Without asking any permission, he walked up to the spot where I was seated, and coolly thrust his dirty fingers into the fat of some salt meat then before me, which he tore off, and proceeded to anoint the wounded beast. On returning for a further supply, he appeared surprised that I objected to this unceremonious method of helping himself. The habits of these Bedowins are in other respects anything but cleanly.

Towards evening we approached the lofty cape called Hammam Bluff, but found that the sea, higher than on ordinary occasions, had covered the track. We were obliged in

consequence to strike off by Wádí Taibí, amidst the hills. I regretted this, because I was desirous of visiting the hot spring called Hammam Pharoun, or "Bath of Pharaoh," which is situated on the sea-side at the foot of the cape. From my guides I learn that pilgrims affected with leprosy and other cutaneous disorders are sometimes left here for the purpose of using them, with provisions and attendants, for several weeks: notwithstanding the heat of the water is so great, that the hand can with difficulty be borne in it, these patients are said to bear immersion for several hours.

From Rás Shiratrib to Hammam Bluff, a distance of thirty-five miles, the coast forms a deep bay, which the natives, most probably from the tempestuous weather experienced there, style Birket-el-Pharoun. Wádí Taibí is narrow, and the heat and glare reflected from the light-coloured hills on either hand, in those places where the defile was but a few yards in width, was almost overpowering. There was not even a solitary cloud in the deep blue canopy above to occasionally intercept the scorching rays. A profound silence

reigned around, interrupted only by the monotonous tramp of the camel, as we wound our way slowly and sleepily along; and all tended to produce feelings of loneliness and melancholy in perfect keeping with the character of these wilds.

During the heat of the day the Bedowins, as on this occasion, wrap themselves up in their cloaks, fold their legs beneath them, and go to sleep on their camels: were an European to attempt this, his slumbers would most probably terminate in a *coup de soleil.* We continued along Wádí Taibí. Near its termination tamarisk-trees appear, and also a species of rush growing in swampy ground, where, by digging, water of indifferent quality may be procured.

We had heard so much of the powerful influence of Mohammed Ali in these regions, that no idea of molestation from the Bedowins had ever occurred to me, and I was much surprised, therefore, near this spot, to observe Hamed, who was riding some distance in front, make a sudden halt, and by some sign familiar to the animal, cause his camel to drop suddenly on his knees, while he mo-

tioned, in a violent and agitated manner, for us to dismount and conceal ourselves: he at the same time pointed to a valley on the right, where we saw a party of Bedowins with their camels: at this period I understood but little of Arabic, and apprehending no grounds of alarm, remained laughing at the violence of his gestures, which so enraged him, that drawing his hand across his throat, and pointing again to the Bedowins, he remounted and rode off at full speed, leaving us to follow or not, as we pleased. It was the roughest riding I ever experienced; for the camel's pace, when at speed, is between a trot and a gallop; but so excessively violent, that the rider is jerked at every step several inches from the saddle. We proceeded at this rapid pace for some time, Hamed constantly vowing he would not stop until we reached Suez; but we were not Bedowin Arabs, and had been on our camels, with only one short halt, since day-break: I therefore determined, in spite of all Hamed's remonstrances, to halt and dine. We therefore seated ourselves under a lofty hillock of sand, clothed with shrubs, several of which had been seen during our

journey. In the first instance they appear to be merely ordinary clumps of bushes; but as the wind keeps the sand here in constant agitation, they continue, as they receive alternately increased deposits of sand and vegetation, to enlarge their bulk until some are fifteen feet high. During our halt here, one of our Bedowins proceeded to a short distance, and obtained some water, but refused to allow me to accompany him, as they have often, on some rocky hollow, a supply of rain-water, too scanty for general use, and known only to themselves. I was now made acquainted with the cause of our recent flight. It appeared that we had fallen in with a rival tribe on their own district; and the custom of the country sanctions, on such occasions, that the party passing should share a portion of their receipts with them, whether for merchandize or passengers. Our needless alarm, therefore, it appeared, had been brought about by Hamed's desire to evade the payment of this trifle, and the consequence, if we had been discovered, would have been, that we should have lost our camels, and been left to complete the remainder of our journey on foot.

The Bedowins are very proud of the mettle of their camels. When it was proposed to start again this evening, considering the time we had already been mounted, and our last spirited run, I could not help hinting to Hamed that his beasts would most probably be fatigued, and incapable of work on the morrow: he immediately flew into a violent passion, and swore if such should prove the case with either, he would instantly cut its throat; and although we journeyed until two o'clock, making the time we had been mounted twenty hours, these patient animals evinced neither weariness nor disinclination to proceed. We now encamped in Wádí Usaitu, where there are a few date palms, and some wells of water.

January 29th. Quitting Wádí Usaitu at an early hour this morning, we proceeded at a round pace, and soon entered Girándel, which is more shallow, but broader than the other valleys, and abounds in tamarisks and acacias. Some few clumps of date palms are also visible.

Two hours further brought us to the bitter waters of Howará, which I concluded to be

those of Marah. I had dismounted from my camel, and having taken some in my hand, was repeating half aloud this supposition, when my Bedowin caught the last word of the sentence, "Marah," and observed, "You speak the words of truth; they are indeed murah*."

Around the two fountains, which are situated at but a few yards from the road, there are a few stumped palms. After quitting this spot, we entered on a broad plain, so level, that its horizon would answer as well for astronomical observations as that of the sea; crossing in our progress the valleys of Wadan and Sidir, the beds of which are also but little below the general level. The whole of this tract, from Howará to Ayoun Musa, is, in consequence of its being destitute of water and pasturage, in great disrepute with the Bedowins. Towards sunset we drew towards those fountains; but while yet at a distance of four miles, our camels stretched out their long necks, increased their pace, and showed other symptoms of being conscious that they

* "Murah," is the Arabic for bitter.

were approaching their watering-place. Here we found about twenty turbid pools, exceedingly nauseous both in taste and smell: the shipping are, however, supplied with some of comparatively better, though still very indifferent quality, from a well a short distance to the southward of the other. Interspersed amidst these pools, there are about twenty clumps of palms, the branches of which are so thickly interwoven, that they form a dense, impervious mass, affording to the Arab, where no other can be obtained, a shelter from the piercing northerly winds which prevail here at this season.

January 30th. On the following morning we continued along the sea-shore until we arrived opposite to Suez; and, on the party being discovered, a boat was despatched, in which we crossed to the town: we should otherwise have been compelled to have fetched a circuit of some hours round the arm of the sea, which extends here a considerable distance to the northward.

Notwithstanding so much has been written on the subject of the passage of the Israelites through the waters of the Red Sea, consider-

able difficulty exists in identifying the precise spot where it took place, and consequently the intermediate stations between the point at which they landed and Mount Sinaï. Dismissing from my mind all former hypotheses, and with the Holy Scriptures for my guide, I am convinced this must have taken place near Suez. The objection that there is not sufficient water there to drown the multitude of Pharaoh's host is not entitled to any weight. There is certainly enough at present, and there must have been more than enough formerly, when the sea was much higher, as abundant evidence is everywhere afforded. A tempestuous wind is mentioned as one of the agents employed to effect the miracle. At Suez, after a north-westerly breeze has been blowing some time, the water recedes; and should it be followed by a south-east wind, it rises very suddenly, sometimes as much as six feet, and renders the ferry, situated about one mile and a half to the northward of the town, before available for foot passengers, wholly unpassable for camels. Accidents are not of unfrequent occurrence; and it may be remembered that, from this

same cause, Napoleon Buonaparte, while crossing, nearly perished here *. The elevation and depression of its waters are influenced by the winds in other parts of the Red Sea, but not to the extent it does here at its extremity.

If we assume the passage to have taken place at Suez, there is no difficulty in ascertaining the other stations, which occur naturally enough in the present route from Suez to Sinaï.

The wilderness of Shur, a journey of three days, is the desert tract between Suez and Howará, where, to this day, no water is found. Fifteen hours is the whole distance between these two points; and, encumbered as the Israelites were, five hours, in three consecutive days, is as much as we could expect them to travel.

Howará, with its bitter pools, I conclude to be Marah. As far as my inquiries could ascertain, they are the only wells absolutely bitter in that part.

* In reference to that accident, he is said to have remarked that, had he been drowned, it would have furnished texts for all the preachers in Europe.

Girándel, where there is still water and palm trees, would be Elim:—

Numb. xxxiii. 10.—"And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea."

This is the only part where the road absolutely skirts the Red Sea, and is therefore strongly corroborative of this being the line of their route.

Subsequently, as is there described, the road by Wádí Siddera again enters the mountains.

We have nothing beyond their mere names by which other localities can be identified; but from the shores of the Red Sea, near Ras Silima, where I suppose them to have encamped, to Mount Sinaï, five stages are enumerated. It occupied me twenty-five hours, which would also give daily marches of five hours, as much, in all probability, as they could have accomplished *.

* ITINERARY.

	h.	m.
From the convent to the foot of the pass	4	0
Wádí Szah	2	25
To a defile in Wádí Feiran	3	30
Extremity of date grove	1	25
Halting place—Wádí Mokatteb	4	50
Wádí Mokatteb	2	50
Wádi Siddera	5	10
Ras Silima	1	30
	25	20

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY FROM TÓR TO SINAÏ.

Start from Tór—El Wádi—Fierce debate—Arab quarrels—El Kaá—Botany—Gumma Torræ—Mountains—Sir F. Henniker—Manna described by a Jewish Rabbi—Game—Bedowin Encampment—Snakes—Anecdote—Mountain pass—Arrival at the Convent.

Sept. 21*st,* 1836. MOUNTING, with my baggage, on some camels which had been prepared for me, I quitted Tór to revisit, after a lapse of three years, my friends at Sinaï. We halted at El Wádí for a short time to fill up our water-skins. As several tribes are connected with the conveyance of merchandize or passengers through the peninsula, disputes are constantly occurring. We had, for instance, a fierce debate this morning: swords were drawn, and a most furious clamour ensued. The Arabs, however, though noisy and violent in their gestures, seldom fall to blows, and become easily pacified; and it is remarkable that, notwithstanding their sensitiveness

among each other, they bear the petulance and ill-temper of strangers who travel with them with astonishing good humour.

Quitting this sacred grove, which will be found described elsewhere, on September 22d, at five hours, we crossed the plain of El Kaá, in a direction a little to the eastward of Serbal, which bore north. Extensive tracts are here covered with a saline effervescence; and, altogether, the country is remarkably destitute of trees and bushes. Nearer to El Wádí, there are several varieties, the Tarfa* and Talh† being the most common. The latter produces the Gum Arabic, large quantities of which were formerly obtained in this peninsula, and, being shipped from Tór, it obtained in Europe the name of Gumma Torræ. It is collected in the summer months, and principally from the Wádís of Feiran and Sheïk. Continuing for six hours across the plain, we arrived at the base of the first range of hills, which form a natural bulwark to the mountain district behind it. These exhibit a succession of dark-coloured ridges, increasing in height as they approach the

* Tamarix Orientales. † Acacia gummifera.

mountain range, which, being nearly equidistant from either gulf at the extremity of the Red Sea, may be considered the backbone of the peninsula. From it all the valleys which intersect the country on either side originate. The shaggy and splintered summits and sides of the frowning masses before are entirely denuded of soil; not a tree nor a particle of vegetation appears to break their desolate appearance. Sir Frederick Henniker has not unaptly termed them "Alps unclothed." At eleven hours we entered Wádí Hibron, which is a narrow ravine about 100 yards in breadth. Huge masses of granite, and porphyritic granite, line its bed, and sufficiently denote, in their scattered position, the fury of the winter torrents; but between them only a narrow streamlet now meanders its course. At 11·30 we halted on its banks, beneath the grateful shade of a few date palms. At three hours we again set forward; and, after following the windings of the valley for two hours, at a distance of fifteen miles from, and at an elevation of about 2000 feet above the level of the sea, I first saw the tree which produces the manna

This remarkable substance is secreted by several trees, and in various countries in the East. In some parts of Persia it is believed to be an insect secretion, and is collected from a shrub called gavan, about two feet high, bearing a striking resemblance to the broom. In the hilly district of Looristan, as in Mesopotamia, we find it on several trees of the oak species, which there, however, are of more stunted growth than those of England. From these the manna is collected on cloths spread beneath them at night, and it then bears the form of large crystal drops of dew, such as we see on plants in England in the early part of the morning. Burckhardt observes, that at Erzrúm a substance resembling manna in taste and consistence distils from the tree which bears galls, and with the inhabitants of the country forms one of the principal articles of their food. These would appear to be different from the Sicilian manna used for medicinal purposes, and which botanists have considered as a vegetable gum, procured in Calabria and Sicily, and to be exuded from the *Fraxinus ornus*, or flowering ash. A supposition has, however, been

started, that this might be also the production of the Aphes tribe.

In the Red Sea, on my route to England, I met with a learned Jewish Rabbi, who had traversed much of the East, and whose Travels had been recently published in India. From him I learned that on his journey through the Desert contiguous to Damascus, far removed from trees or vegetation of any kind, a substance was deposited, which, from his description, in appearance, size, and flavour, accurately resembled the manna of Scripture. This was firmly believed by him and the people of the country to have fallen there as a dew from heaven.

I should, however, have scarcely ventured on his single evidence to narrate a story in appearance little worthy of attention or credence, had not several Bedowins of the country, with whom I have conversed, borne testimony to the same effect; and, as being likely to lead to the knowledge of some substance with which we are at present unacquainted, it may not be considered unworthy the inquiry and investigation of future travellers.

But a manna, differing in some respects from all those which I have specified, is found near to Mount Sinaï, and has been regarded with peculiar interest, in consequence of its connexion with one of the most striking events recorded in Scripture history. The tree which produces it here is the Tamarix Mannifera of Ehrenberg, a species differing from that found on the sea coast, and nearly related to the Tamarix Gallica, but from which, beyond obtaining a greater height, and being somewhat more bushy in its foliage, it has little otherwise of importance to distinguish it. The substance produced by these trees, to which the designation of manna has been given in Europe, retains in Mun, among the Arabs, the name bestowed on this food of the wilderness by their collateral ancestors the Hebrews.

It is found collected in small globules on the branches of the tree, and falls during the heat of the day beneath it. Whether the Sinaï manna be an animal or vegetable substance, it is hoped will be no longer an undecided question; since there is not only ample proof that the exudation is occasioned by the puncture of a small species of Coccus, named

by Ehrenberg the Coccus Mannifera, which, together with the peculiar mode in which its labours are conducted, is figured in his work, but, at the period of my visit in September, although, after the minutest inspection, no insects were visible, yet the extremities of the twigs and branches, where they are commonly found, retained that peculiar sweetness and flavour which characterizes the manna. The Bedowins collect it early in the morning, and after straining it through cloths, place it in either skins or gourds. A considerable quantity is consumed by themselves; a portion is sent to Cairo; and some is also disposed of to the monks at Mount Sinaï. The latter retail it to the Russian pilgrims, who receive it with much reverence, as an incontestable proof of the event to which it refers. The Bedowins assured me, that the whole quantity collected throughout the peninsula, in the most fruitful seasons, did not exceed one hundred and fifty wogas (about seven hundred pounds); and that it was usually disposed of at the rate of sixty dollars the woga. They regard it as a great luxury, and use it for all the purposes of honey; but if taken in

any large quantity, it is said to prove a mild laxative. In this respect, therefore, it bears a resemblance to the manna of commerce; but here it is only collected in seasons after heavy rains, and has sometimes been withheld for a period of seven years. From its having retained the name, and being found in such a locality, the thoughts naturally wander to the event recorded in Holy Writ; and though well pleased, could we establish a further identity with the substance there described, yet, when we are told the latter rained from heaven, was collected during six days only, and would not keep more than one, we are compelled, however reluctantly, to abandon further expectation of doing so.

Amidst the tamarisk bushes in this valley, some of which are from fifteen to twenty feet high, birds are very numerous; we also observed the red-legged and common Desert partridge, quails, doves, pigeons, martens, swallows, hawks, eagles, &c. During my present stay in the peninsula, we always shot on our route a sufficiency of game for our daily meals.

A few hours after sunset, we halted near a

Bedowin encampment, where, shortly after it was dark, the women suddenly set up a most dismal screaming. Hastening with our guns to ascertain the cause, we found a snake had made its way amidst them, which we instantly shot. The Bedowins, upon examination, declared it was of the most venomous kind, and that death generally ensued an hour after its bite; but snakes are no novelty to those who have been in India, and the Arabs were astonished at the indifference we exhibited in handling it. Our Arab guide stood at a distance of several yards, exhorting us to caution, and with his sword drawn to defend himself from its approach. I do not recollect that mention has been made by any traveller of snakes being found in this part of Arabia, though Burckhardt speaks of them on the eastern shore of the peninsula.

At 9·30, the night being clear and serene, with a fine moon, we continued our journey, and at 12·10, halted at the foot of a pass, where there was a small pool of water.

Friday, September 23rd. At 5·45 we walked up the acclivity, which is of such moderate steepness, that it was unnecessary to descend

from our camels. The passes generally are far less steep and rugged on the western, than on the eastern side of the peninsula. At 7·30 we reached the summit, and obtained an extensive, but dreary view of the surrounding country; narrow ridges of bare and bleak rocks extend in every direction; veins of a dark colour traverse them diagonally, and sometimes horizontally, adding much to their striking appearance; then, descending about seven hundred feet, we entered Wádí S'laf, which has a broad, sandy bed, producing, amidst other odoriferous herbs, many clusters of wild thyme. At 10·30, we halted near a copious fountain of pure water, called Sabara, and after enjoying our siesta, at 2·20, we left, and ascended another pass, paved in many places, and with few steep acclivities. From the summit of this we crossed a large plain, terminating in a broad and extensive valley; and at 6·30 arrived at the convent. It has been objected to the identification of Jebel Musa with Mount Sinaï, that the narrow valleys and ravines contiguous to it could not have contained the immense multitude of the Israelites. In this valley, however, there

is more than ample space for them; while, at the same time, at its termination, Mount Sinaï stood forth in naked majesty, clearly exposing to the uninterrupted view of all the effects of that terrific elemental warfare, which proclaimed the presence of the Deity, and accompanied the gift of the sacred tables of the Jewish law.

On my route from Sinaï to Suez, on this occasion, I visited the ruins of Feiran, situated on either side of an elbow formed by the winding of the valley of the same name. The houses are small, but well constructed, and have remarkably low doors; on a stone, forming the upper portion of one of these, I found a very antique Greek inscription, too much defaced to admit of my transcribing it. I examined several sepulchral grottos which have been excavated in the mountain, but found no remains of the dead bodies it was evident they had formerly contained. Feiran was formerly a large city, and had for its bishop the famous Theodorus, who wrote against the Monothelites.

My route on this occasion appears on the map, which, I presume, will be found to pos-

sess very considerable accuracy. Our survey furnishes me with the position of all the principal points, and my several journeys have enabled me to fill up the detail. Geographers had been previously much puzzled to reconcile the itineraries of different travellers who visited these regions, in consequence, as it there appears, of their adopting different routes*.

* During these several journeys, a very large collection of plants was made, which are now in the possession of A. Bourke Lambert, Esq., V.P.L.S., and are in the course of scientific arrangement; but being of little interest or use to man, I have forborne to insert the list here.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY FROM SHERM TO SINAÏ.

Rás Mohammed—Supplies of Provisions—Passage to Tór and Suez—Geological features—View of Mount Sinaï—Journey to the Convent—Encampment—Fuel—Effects of the heat—Heavy dews—Natural Reservoirs—Ancient Israelites—Small-pox—Inoculation—Social affections among the Arabs—Flowers—Reflections—Moonlight—Dangerous pass—Bedowin Coffee—British Tars—Bedowin Arms—Cookery—Unclean habits—Mountaineers—Arab honesty—Anecdote—Cultivation of the Palm—Camels—Lovely pasturage—Night scene in a Cave.

In the month of January, 1833, we encountered much severe weather near Rás Mohammed, and were eventually obliged to put into a harbour in its vicinity to refit.

Rás (or Cape) Mohammed is the southern extreme of the peninsula of Sinaï. The coast about it is low and rugged, and cannot be discerned at a greater distance than three leagues and a half. Lying off its eastern side, there is a small island, of uniform eleva-

tion, which is separated from the main by a narrow and shallow passage. The land forming the Cape is a long narrow tract nearly divided, about six miles from the extreme, by a deep bay. Five miles further to the northward, a range of mountains takes its rise, and extends nearly the whole length of the peninsula: their general elevation may be estimated at from 3000 to 5000 feet; and during the winter months, the summit of the highest is frequently covered with snow.

About ten miles to the northward of the Cape, there are two small harbours, separated from each other by a narrow neck of land. Both are included by the Arabs when speaking of them under the appellation of Sherm * or Shermún; but they are also separately distinguished, one by the name of Sherm-el-Sheïkh, from the tomb of a Sheïkh at the extreme end of the bay, and the more northern by that of Sherm-el-Móyah †, in which we are now at anchor, from its having some wells of water in its vicinity. These harbours were visited by Sir Home Popham in 1801, and are marked in his chart as spots

* Dsjerm in Niebuhr's Map. † Water-bay.

from whence water may be procured. At the period of our visit the Hajj * boats were supplied from some rudely-constructed wells, near a few date trees, about 150 yards from the beach; but the water is of a very indifferent quality, and would not be tolerated by Europeans. The Bedowins are unwilling to part with the few sheep they possess, and no other supplies are procurable here. The red and yellow earths which abound in the hills in the vicinity of the anchorage, are used by the Arab mariners for their boats as substitutes for paint; and near the tomb in Sherm-el-Sheïkh they procure an abundance of rock-salt. As a plan of these inlets accompanies the chart, it will be unnecessary for me to mention more than that, for shipping, the northern one appears preferable to the southern.

Travellers proceeding in native boats to Kosaïr, who are less anxious to visit Thebes, and to sail on that part of the Nile between it and Cairo, than to effect a quick passage to Europe, may probably feel disposed to land here, and proceed on camels directly to Tór or Suez. The Nákhodás †

* Pilgrimage. † Arab captains.

generally work up to this cape, whence, if they have a fair wind, they run at once to Kosaïr*, or otherwise they wait until they obtain one. Travellers journeying to Suez would do well to adopt this route during the prevalence of north-westerly breezes, here frequently of many days' duration, and rendering a passage through the Straits of Jabál, and up the sea of Suez, both tedious and dangerous.

Another advantage would be gained by those so disposed, in the opportunity presented of visiting the Monastery of Sinaï, which may be approached from Sherm by two routes, viz. Derb Wáṛah, very indifferent, and in many places scarcely passable, but preferred by the Bedowins in consequence of the abundant herbage it yields, or Derb Kedd, not only considerably shorter, but the ascent, with the exception of one pass, is gradual through valleys of firm sand. The journey, by the latter route, is estimated at two days and a half, and the cost of a single camel thence and back is four dollars.

It is erroneously supposed that Mount Sinaï

* That is, "the little castle."

may be seen at sea off Rás Mohammed, and also off Tór, but the intervention of the neighbouring hills prevents it being observed from any other spot than about eight miles to the north-eastward of Sherm, from which situation its summit may be distinguished in clear weather.

Near Sherm there are volcanic rocks which are not found in any other part of the peninsula, and attention has been in consequence drawn towards them in Europe, but I could not trace their existence more than three miles from the beach. The country where they are found rises into mere hillocks, with none of the features we might expect to find in Sinaï and its neighbourhood; I therefore attach but little importance to them.

As the Palinurus was to remain here for some time, I availed myself of the opportunity her stay afforded to proceed to Sinaï; but in consequence of the recent departure of some pilgrims for Suez, I found at first a difficulty in obtaining camels, but the offer of a few additional dollars induced the Bedowins at length to bring them from some distance. I left the vessel on the even-

ing of the 8th, accompanied by the purser and three European seamen, and after the usual wrangling and clamour amidst the Arabs respecting the distribution and packing of the few articles the party had with them, about nine o'clock we proceeded on our journey*. The route continued in a north-westerly direction along the sea-shore, but was so rugged, that we were compelled to walk; about one o'clock, we halted near a few straggling mimosa trees. Our guides proved better Mussulmans than those who accompanied me on my journey from Tór, for they neither partook of spirits, nor neglected the observance of the Ramadan. The party now distributed themselves to obtain firewood, but were soon recalled by the intelligence that the Bedowins possessed a store, which had been cut and left to dry near our encampment. Such stores are considered the common property of the tribe in whose territories they are found, and as they

* As I was enabled to fix the position of Sinaï with exactness, by observation, I have not swollen this chapter with the dry detail of the names of each particular valley or locality. They will all be found correctly detailed in the map.

never delay a journey in order to renew what has been consumed, one of their number is occasionally despatched on that errand. Owing to the excessive heat to which they are constantly exposed, most of the trees and bushes found on the Desert require no preparation of drying, but will burn immediately they are cut. Camels' dung is also very frequently used for fuel; it is found in almost every part of the Desert, and where wood is scarce, is invaluable to the Bedowin; being easily ignited, affording considerable heat, and not liable to be extinguished by the wind.

January 9th. After a night of sound repose, although our carpets were dripping with the dew which had fallen, we left about daylight, and continuing along a narrow, barren valley until nine, entered Wádí Seder, and an opening in an intervening range of low hills disclosed the sea, distant about seven miles; the north end of Senáfer being in a transit line with the Mowilahh Peaks. About an hour later, we entered another valley leading into the interior, where the mountains on either side are composed of granite, of a reddish colour, and coarse texture; the hills nearer

the sea-coast were mostly of sandstone formation. We halted for a short time at the western extremity of this valley, while our guides filled their water skins at a large natural reservoir formed amidst the rocks; several others were shown me in this vicinity, all completely filled by the late rains. It has excited no small astonishment, that a prodigious multitude like the Israelites, consisting of six hundred thousand men, exclusive of women, children, and servants, should have found a sufficiency of water during their wanderings in the desert of Sinaï; but these reservoirs are numerous. The valleys also in the winter months are often beds of streams, and afford water very generally at other seasons, by digging a few feet below the surface; I therefore see no reason to imagine any want of this necessary. But as regards their unfailing supply of food, where the annual produce of the peninsula would scarcely have supported them for a single day, it is impossible, notwithstanding there are those ever desirous of attributing supernatural events to physical causes, who have referred it to other agency, not to receive it

as it is given us, in the light of a miracle. Several of our Bedowins appear to have suffered from the ravages of the small-pox, a disease more prevalent here than in any part of the coast which I have visited. This appears to be owing to the constant intercourse the Towárá Bedowins have with Cairo, the grand nursery of this scourge, as of the plague. Inoculation and vaccination are here unknown, and such is the aversion which the Bedowins entertain of this horrible pest, that though on ordinary occasions they are not inattentive to their sick, and take but comparatively few precautions against the plague, yet, as soon as an individual is attacked by the small-pox, by common consent he is abandoned to his fate. A lone hut may often be observed at a short distance from the towns, both on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, which is tenanted by a sufferer thus affected. The person who conveys their daily food and water observes the utmost caution whilst approaching to deposit them: the social affections are nevertheless more warmly cherished amidst the Arabs than with other orientals; and even in this scourge, several instances

were related to me of females who had wholly devoted themselves to the charge of the sick person; in which case they share their quarantine together. Thus trusting their recovery to nature, it will readily be imagined that, of the number attacked, but a very few recover; but in the Desert the air is pure, and the intercourse much less general than in towns; so that this, or any other contagion, extends but a short distance from them. The direction of the valley through which we now advanced was north-west. A winter torrent but a few weeks before had swept through it: trees torn from their roots and deposited against hillocks of sand, or other impediments which had obstructed their career, and the wasted, shattered appearance of the banks on either hand, afforded abundant proofs of the fury of its course. In the crevices of the rocks which bound this valley there is a great variety of flowers now in full bloom, which yielded a delicious fragrance as we passed along. Several camels had been left without attendants to browse on them; and they are at this period so succulent, that those invaluable

animals require, when thus fed, no water: nevertheless, it is singular, considering the plants are all highly aromatic, that their breath should still, as at other periods, prove highly offensive.

After dark, our road was crossed by several streams, and we found considerable difficulty in threading our way over or between the masses of rock which were strewn around. From this we were very shortly relieved by the rising of the moon. The defile now became very narrow, and wo camels could with difficulty pass abreast; while its direction was so circuitous, that, until we had approached some projecting point, from whence the outlet was discovered, it often appeared to be wholly blocked up.

It is not when winding amidst these alpine barriers, beneath the fierce glare of a noon-tide sun, that the traveller's mind becomes impressed with the recollection of past events which have been transacted there. Such thoughts are best called forth in the calm and still hour of such a night as this, when no sound is heard save the almost noiseless tread of the camel; when the moon, with a brilliancy unknown in more northern climes,

sheds its flood of splendour over each naked, smooth, and shining precipice; and often strongly contrasts with the gloomy shadow which overhangs the path of white sand at their base. The mind then recalls the wanderings of the most favoured as well as the most sinful people under heaven. We follow them winding their way amidst the wilderness; we picture to ourselves their venerable bearded old men, their women and children; and we mourn over that obduracy so strikingly illustrative of the imperfections of our nature, which called for such a punishment.

Towards midnight I was aroused from these reflections by our arrival at a steep and slippery pass. After several severe falls, our camels succeeded in crossing it, with the exception of one, which it became necessary to take round by another path. So much time however was wasted, that I halted there for the night beneath an overhanging rock, which most probably had sheltered travellers for ages. The night was cold but clear, and the stars shone gloriously in the firmament.

January 10*th.* At daylight we shared some excellent coffee which the Bedowins had pre-

pared for us. Instead of grinding them as we do, they pound their berries between two stones, and that only when they are required for use. The addition of milk and sugar is unknown, and water being used in less proportion than is customary in Europe, their coffee is consequently very strong.

A group of Bedowins were disputing respecting the sanity of Lady Esther Stanhope; one party strenuously maintaining that it was impossible a lady so charitable, so munificent, could be otherwise than in full possession of her faculties. Their opponents alleged that her assimilating herself to the Virgin Mary, her anticipated entry with our Saviour into Jerusalem, and other vagaries attributed to her, were proofs to the contrary. An old man with a white beard called for silence (a call from the aged amidst the Arabs seldom made in vain). "She *is mad*," said he; and, lowering his voice to a whisper, as if fearful such an outrage against established custom should spread beyond his circle, he added, "for she puts sugar to her coffee." This was conclusive.

Almost every Bedowin carries with him his apparatus for making coffee, consisting of a

small pot and a circular iron for roasting the berry. The use of this beverage is indeed almost universal; and a few cups, with a pipe of tobacco, to which their chiefs as well as the poorer classes are passionately attached, will, after the greatest fatigue, induce them to remain up chatting the greater part of the night. Yesterday our guides, thus employed, did not retire until within two hours of daylight, and we had packed up and left a short time after sunrise.

The Bedowins were highly amused at the pranks of the sailors I had with me. Ever restless, these men could not endure the monotony of camel travelling, and were continually seeking some expedient to divert it. Every position was successively tried, and some few falls were the result. All their mishaps or allusions had some reference to nautical affairs. The appellations they bestowed on the Bedowins, or received from them in return, were a source of constant mirth. Our venerable-looking Sheïkh was not inaptly termed Father Abraham. His real name was Ibrám.

Towards noon we commenced ascending a

hill by a road so exceedingly steep and rugged, that it was with the utmost difficulty that our camels, after being deprived of half their luggage, which we carried ourselves, could be got over. About three miles from the summit of this hill we passed a Bedowin encampment, the first we had met since leaving the coast. They behaved with great civility, and supplied us with abundance of milk, for which they refused any remuneration. Their arms were the jambîr and matchlock. The former is applied to various other purposes besides a weapon of defence. With it they are very dexterous in slaying and skinning their sheep, for the whole affair does not occupy more than ten minutes. After the hide has been taken off, the carcase and head are deposited in it, when not required for immediate use. Their mode of cooking, though certainly very primitive, impressed us with no favourable idea of their cleanliness. A hole is dug in the sand, around the bottom and sides of which some stones are placed, and a fire is then lighted within. When these are sufficiently heated, they remove the embers, and introduce their meat, which they cover over

with sand. In about half an hour the sand is removed, and the meat turns out better cooked than persons accustomed only to the ordinary culinary process would expect. But the way in which they dress and eat the offal of the animals they kill furnishes a still more unfavourable specimen of Bedowin habits. The entrails, with no other cleansing than being drawn through the fingers, and the head and feet only partially divested of the hair, are placed in a pan over the fire. In a few minutes it is withdrawn, the dirty water thrown away, some fresh added, and the whole, being again boiled, is eaten without farther preparation. I have sometimes observed our guides break in pieces the biscuits they had received from the seamen, and, after pouring a quantity of rancid butter over them, stir the mess with their fingers over the fire, until well warmed and soaked, and then devour it with much relish.

Near the encampment we observed several antelopes. The Bedowins are very fond of their flesh, which they prefer to mutton. Beef, unless to those who have visited Cairo, is unknown. I do not think there exists a bul-

lock in the whole peninsula of Sinaï. The sheep are small, and their flesh by no means well tasted.

The Bedowins who dwell in the hills appear to be a hardy race, stouter and more muscular than those of the coast—a distinction no doubt originating in a superior climate and more wholesome water,—both, near the sea-shore, being very indifferent. The mountain Arabs also live much better, and with less exertion, than their brethren of the plain. The chief occupations of the former are confined to the care of their herds, the cultivation of the date-tree, and manufacturing charcoal, which they dispose of at Suez and Cairo. The latter derive a subsistence by hiring themselves and their beasts for the conveyance of pilgrims to and fro between Sherm and Tór, and also from the latter place to Suez. Incessant fatigue and indifferent nourishment soon undermine their health.

About an hour after our departure next morning, a youth was observed following at a great distance, and calling on our party to stop; but, as I considered his errand to be some trifling affair with his countrymen, I

did not halt. He persevered, however, and, to my no small surprise, on coming up, presented me with a small parcel, containing a sextant, which had been dropped on the road. I felt the more delighted with his honesty and attention, because he was unknown to any of our party. On offering him a present, he refused it, and, when I again pressed it on his acceptance, he turned and walked away. In savage life it has been remarked, that great virtues occasionally approach to great vices; and the casuist may amuse himself with tracing the impulses and feelings which can urge these men—in some instances professedly robbers—to exercise in others the most scrupulous honesty.

Hence our route continued more to the northward, still ascending by a winding and extensive valley called Wádí Garat. Presently we caught a glimpse of Mowílahh, a high peak, bearing south-east by south. We passed many streams of water and numerous date-palms. I could not help remarking, as a singularity, that the lower branches of these trees were not removed annually, as is usual at Tór and other parts of Arabia; here they

are permitted to dry on the trunk, giving them a neglected appearance, although it is possible that the barrier which they form may be necessary for their protection against the cold bleak winds of these regions. About an hour afterwards we arrived at a mountain-pass almost inaccessible. Our camels wound their way with the utmost difficulty over or between the huge masses which everywhere obstruct the descent. Camels are not unfrequently supposed to be only adapted for sandy or level tracts; but I have observed, both here and in other parts, provided the rocks possess a certain degree of roughness, that in sureness of step they are surpassed by no animals except mules. The Bedowins never goad them, nor use any other excitement than the voice. On reaching the foot of the pass about sunset, we halted, and our camels were permitted to stray in search of pasturage, which is here found in clustering patches in great abundance. Their lively green affords a striking and pleasing relief to the general scene of barrenness around—a solitary antelope,—"the wild gazelle,"—which bounds off as soon as discovered, being the only living thing seen there.

As soon as the moon rose, we again proceeded on our journey until eleven, when we halted for the night in a cave by the side of a considerable rivulet, and near the foot of a steep mountain. Here we found some drift-wood, and, from the intense cold during the night, a large fire became very necessary. In the interior of this cavern, amidst Nature's wildest scenery, and rendered doubly interesting by our near approach to a spot so interesting from Scriptural and historical recollections, we passed the night. The flames, ascending flickering and tortuous to the roof, illumined with their deep red flashes the walls of our retreat, as well as the forms and countenances of my sailor companions. Bursts of the wildest laughter, songs, and jests, arose at intervals from every one present except the placid Bedowins, who squatted on the ground, maintaining the most unmoved gravity, with their matchlocks between their knees. Indeed the whole scene was quite to a wanderer's taste, probably not the less so from the consciousness that we were travelling with ease and security through a region which but a few years ago was considered to be both difficult and dangerous.

CHAPTER V.

Hints to Travellers—Water and Water-skins—Inscriptions—Arab Places of Sepulture—Jebel Subeiyah—Arrival at the Monastery—Difficulty of Admission—Reception—The Convent Cook—Monastic Fare—The Travellers' Room—Comfortable Quarters—Monastic Album—The Missionary Wolff—Discipline and Habits of the Monks—Dress—Diet—Fasts—Scruples respecting Animal Food—Use of Spirits—Anecdote of British Sailors—The Superior—Position of the Monastery—General Appearance—Interior of the Church, Chapels, &c.—Splendid Screen—Skeleton Hand—William de Bauldersell—Sarcophagus of Catherine of Russia—The "Burning Bush"—Ascent of the Mount—Description of the summit—Reflections.

January 11th. On preparing to leave this morning, the Bedowins found our water-skins frozen; yet, so pure is the air in these elevated regions, that most of our party slept in the open air without experiencing any ill effects. Some few hints suggest themselves here to me which may prove of service to those who may hereafter traverse these or the neighbouring regions. Let them on no account encumber themselves with a tent, for

there is always difficulty in prevailing on the Arabs to engage in what they consider the useless labour of pitching it; and, from an objection to separate their camels, they are not easily induced to send it on before. The greatest inconvenience which attends the traveller during these short excursions arises from the indifferent quality of the water; for, unless measures are taken to prevent them, the Arabs will always place it in new skins, which, from neglect in not properly cleansing them, and their being constantly agitated, communicate an insufferably offensive smell and taste. To prevent this, let the traveller provide himself with tanned water-skins brought from Masawwah and Suwákin, and sold in the markets of Cairo, Suez, and Jiddah.

He who wishes to encumber himself with as little luggage as possible—and if he be wise he will strive to do so—had better provide one of those narrow beds generally made for sea-cots. It forms an excellent covering for the camel, taking care to select a proper riding-saddle (*i. e.* one which has a piece of wood at either extremity before and behind),

and to place it lengthways across the animal's back, allowing both ends to hang down. Over this a coverlet stuffed with cotton will be found an agreeable addition. Care should be taken neither to ride on flannel nor wear it next the skin. Silk sleeping-drawers worn underneath the ordinary pantaloons will be found admirably adapted for those unaccustomed to camel-riding. My directions will not be considered too minute by those who have endured, for any length of time, riding on a bad saddle. Half an hour's suffering at the commencement of a journey will be quite sufficient to render the remainder intolerable.

As we continued our route along a narrow valley, by a winding and rugged ascent, our passage was constantly intercepted by large blocks of granite, which, apparently by the action of the sunny heat after cold weather, had been detached from the sides of the hills on either side, some of which rose to the height of two thousand feet.

It is singular that no inscriptions are found on the eastern side of the peninsula, since they occur in almost every valley on the western. About noon we passed a few stunted

date-trees, which overshadowed several graves. Here, as in other parts of Arabia, these are distinguished simply by a rude fragment of rock placed at either extremity. The summit of a hill is usually chosen by the Arabs for their places of sepulture; and they still retain the primitive custom of bringing their dead from afar to be interred there.

As we approached the termination of the valley its ruggedness disappeared, and we now travelled with facility over a bed of firm sand, the whiteness of which contrasts well with the dark mountains that bound the defile, here but a few yards in breadth. Shortly after noon we reached the summit of Jebel Subeïyá, and from hence several hundred feet, and distant about five miles, we first saw the monastery. The wind, even at this hour, blew from the direction of Jebel Musá so keen and cold, that we were obliged to dismount from our camels and walk until about five, when we halted beneath its walls.

We found some difficulty in procuring admission in consequence of being unprovided with a certificate; and, had it not fortunately happened that one of the party had visited

the convent but a few months previous, and had subsequently supplied them with a new rope and pulley, as has happened to several other travellers, we should have been compelled to return without satisfying our curiosity with a sight of the interior.

Upon our arrival, we found several Bedowins seated around the walls, who saluted us by the appellation of Haji, or pilgrim. They then commenced shouting and firing their matchlocks, until one of the monks opened a door thirty or forty feet from the ground. From a part of the building projecting over this door, a rope was now lowered down, having a noose fixed at its extremity. In this one of the party seated himself; and the other end being fastened to a capstan, turned by the monks, they soon hoisted us up, and after due salutations from the superior, we passed to the travellers' room. There we were committed to the especial care of the cook, a round, sleek-headed, fat, and facetious-looking personage, who has charge of the refectory, and who paid unremitting attention to our wants and comforts during our stay. But notwithstanding the hospitable efforts of the monks, who cheer-

fully bestow all that their convent affords, the traveller will fare ill, unless he comes provided with a stock of provisions. Vegetables, however good and plentiful, indifferent cheese, with bread and sweetmeats, will form, at least to an Englishman's taste, but unsubstantial comforts after so long and fatiguing a journey, and in such a climate. The rules of the convent permit not the slaughter of any animal within its walls; but sheep may very frequently be procured from the Bedowins, and no objection will be made to cooking the meat after it has been prepared by them.

Intense as were our feelings of curiosity to view the numerous interesting objects around, they yielded this evening to the effects of our journey; and reserving that pleasure until the morrow should render us the more fitting to enjoy them, we retired at an early hour to our place of repose. It was a small, snug chamber, spread with rich carpets, on which were placed large cushions; while thick coverlids, stuffed with cotton, the cleanliness and freshness of which were alone sufficient to recommend them, served us for both sheets

and blankets. A massive lamp, curiously wrought, and apparently of great antiquity, stood in the centre of the apartment; around the walls of which, upon shelves, were a few books deposited by former visitors. Among others, I saw a register of the names of those travellers who had for several years past arrived here. It was remarkably brief. The names of Sir Frederick Henniker, Giovani Finatti. and Mr. Wolff, were alone familiar to me. After his signature, the latter has appended the following remarks, too characteristic to be omitted :—"Jos. Wolff, Missionary to the Jews, employed by Henry Drummond, Esq., arrived here Nov. 6th, 1821. Many, many of my ancestors sleep here; and Moses gave here his holy law under thunders and lightnings. He was on the top of the Mount for forty days and forty nights: he did neither eat bread nor drink water; but he lived of every word that came out of the mouth of the Lord. He saw that prophet which was like unto him, Jesus Christ our Saviour, and his Saviour. Written by Mr. Joseph Wolff from Germany, *sent forth* by Henry Drummond,

22, Charing Cross, London, to preach the gospel of peace to the Jews* "

In discipline, diet, &c., the monastic establishment of Mount Sinaï appears to differ but little from other institutions of a similar nature in Egypt and Syria. The monks, of whom there are now but twenty-one, principally Russians and Greeks, are compelled to pass many hours in the church during the day; and we heard the call to prayers twice also during the night, a practice general throughout the year; no one whose health permits (and in this delightful region, illness, save from extreme age, is almost unknown) being allowed to absent himself.

They rise at four o'clock in the morning; and, having little beyond their devotional

* It would have been more consistent with the faith he now avows, if this reverend enthusiast had, on his subsequent visit, confined himself to remarks conceived in a similar spirit, instead of indulging in personalities, which men who judge the mildest, cannot but consider gross, offensive, and uncalled for. These having been printed in the *Malta Gazette*, I have no wish to extend their publicity by giving them insertion here. The direct application of such indecent epithets as "dirty dogs," and "nasty beasts of infidels," to persons of whom he had no knowledge, and whose signatures only appeared in the book, will, I am sure, be considered sufficient to justify what I have said.

exercises to occupy them during the day, retire to rest about eight or nine in the evening. They are their own artificers, every one except the superior exercising some trade necessary or useful to the establishment. The lodging of each is a narrow cell about eight feet long and six broad, with an arched roof, and a niche in the wall, answering as a cupboard. Its sole furniture is a mattress and coverlid. Their clothes, in which they sleep, for the convenience of being summoned to prayer, consists of a shirt and trowsers of coarse blue cotton, over which they wear a thick cloak, fastened to the waist by a leathern belt, and marked with alternate vertical stripes of black or brown. In the refectory there is a pulpit, from whence one of their number, during their repasts, reads prayers, until the signal is given for retiring. They have but two meals a-day; these, during the greater part of the year, consist of a few boiled vegetables or a coarse loaf, with occasionally a little fish and oil. The former is brought from the shores of the Mediterranean, and is excellent; the latter is extensively manufactured at the convent from the olive

groves in the garden, and in the vale of *Rephidem.*

Like other Greeks, lent is enjoined them thrice during the year, besides a great many fasts or saints' days; all of which they are said to observe most scrupulously. Though animal food is strictly prohibited, the monks partake freely of a pleasant spirit. To this the tars I had with me were of course much attached; and when the hospitality of the monks supplied them freely with it, they would kindly, and with much earnestness, reason with them on their abstinence from the "flesh pots." I am not aware that they were ever successful, but one told me with great glee, that after repeated invitations, he had prevailed with several to indulge their olfactories with the savoury steam of some meat then roasting.

At the period of my visit, the Superior was a young man of handsome appearance and prepossessing manners: he had recently returned from Cairo, whither he was summoned by the Patriarch to answer some complaints made against him by the Bedowins. Most of the young men appeared melancholy, pale, and sickly; while some of the aged monks,

who, as we were informed, had been immured within these walls for forty years, looked hale, vigorous, and contented with their condition.

The present monastery was constructed and endowed by the Greek emperor Justinian, during the latter years of his reign; and an inscription on a marble tablet over a gate, now closed up, describes it as a memorial of himself and his wife Theodora. It is built in a valley, extending from north to south, and so exceedingly narrow, that in order to avoid blocking it up, and thereby endangering the building by the rush of the mountain torrent, the architect was obliged to erect a portion on the summit of the ascent of the western mountain. The whole covers a large space of ground, in the form of an oblong square, and, at a distance, presents the appearance of an ill-arranged mass of buildings, with a few tall cypresses rising above them, and surrounded with lofty walls, rudely constructed, and of unequal height. On the eastern side, there are several towers, as well as broad and massive buttresses to strengthen the walls. A considerable portion of the irregularity observable in the distribution of the interior,

is owing to the uneven nature of the ground; but much of this might have been remedied had the architect consulted convenience or appearance, when each succeeding portion was added. Two ranges, or stories of cells, now occupy the eastern and northern sides, but only the upper tier, containing also the travellers' apartments, is inhabited, the lower being converted into lumber and store-rooms. The remaining space, chiefly filled with chapels and court-yards, has a very neat appearance, being paved at the sides, and ornamented in their centre with shrubs and flowers. There are twenty-seven chapels within the walls, devoted to the service of different sects of Christianity. I visited all, but found them remarkable for nothing save some miserable daubs of St. George and the Dragon, the Virgin Mary, and the Infant Jesus. Each has a small altar, on which incense is kept burning. They seem to be quite abandoned; divine service being now only performed in the large church. The antiquity and remarkable appearance of this latter edifice, braving, as it has done for so many ages, the wild tribes of the desert by which it is surrounded, and still untouched, though so feebly defended, in all

its costliness and riches, excites in a particular manner the attention of a traveller. It is said to have been built by Justinian, at the time that he founded the monastery, and his picture, with that of Theodora, may yet be traced in the upper part of the dome erected over the altar. Some fine pillars support the roof, the floor is beautifully tesselated with variegated marbles, and along the walls, and in almost every part of the church, there are numerous paintings of our Saviour, the Apostles, and also many allegorical subjects. Some of these are well, others are wretchedly executed. The mirth of our tars could scarcely be suppressed, when they saw a broad caricature of the Day of Judgment, in which a number of grotesque naked figures are represented as having just risen from the grave, and from the sea. They wait their turn to be weighed in a pair of scales supported by an angel, while the Devil, in the shape of a huge shark, with distended jaws, lurks below to receive those who are found wanting. A light arch, supported by gilt columns, separates the body of the church from the precincts of the altar: the upper part of this

inclosure is occupied by a picture of the Crucifixion, and the whole of the lower portion, between the numerous paintings, is tastefully inlaid with ivory, tortoiseshell, and silver. Behind this, protected by an iron railing, stands the altar, said to be erected near the spot where the Lord first appeared to Moses. In imitation of his example, the pilgrim is here directed to take off his shoes, and he is then shown a bible, which is described to be of great antiquity. Looking towards the right of the altar, there is a marble lamb, concealed from public view by an ornamental curtain, containing the relics of St. Catherine. These, according to the legend, were borne by angels to the summit of the neighbouring mountain (which bears her name), and were subsequently transported here. The skeleton of the hand, covered with rings and jewels, is the only portion exhibited to visitors, and its removal from the coffin is accompanied by much mummery: incense is burnt, the monks are bareheaded, and prayers are chanted.

Near these relics, and illumined on fast days by a number of enormous tapers, stands

the silver bed of a sarcophagus, having in bas-relief a full length figure of the Empress Catherine of Russia. By the Superior's account, she sent it, with the intent that it should cover her remains here; but the convent never received that honor; and on a subsequent visit, I found the lid had disappeared. The costly offerings bestowed at different periods by rich or powerful members of the Greek Church are everywhere conspicuous in the massive silver candlesticks, numerous lamps, and other church furniture; but grants, and bequests of money, if we may believe the Superior's account, were formerly much more frequent than at the present day. Instances of the zeal which once induced numerous votaries to consecrate their lives as well as their property to the service of the Church, are now likewise of rare occurrence. Few of the monks possess property, nor do they remain beyond a few years; but return to their own country, content with the reputation of sanctity which a residence for however short a period on a spot so holy fails not to confer. The pulpit is light and elegant: before it, on the upper part, I remarked an eagle with ex-

panded wings grasping in its beak a chain, from which a silver lamp was suspended. The stairs and body of the pulpit are inlaid with tortoiseshell, in the same manner as the arch before the altar, but the whole effect is destroyed by the ballustrades, which, with that singular mixture of tawdriness and profusion generally prevalent in Greek and Coptic churches, is constructed of wood, painted red and yellow. We were next shown the well of Moses, which has received its appellation from a tradition that he first drank of its waters; and not far from hence is exhibited the identical "burning bush." Pity it is, that the monks by the narration of such silly traditions should destroy the enthusiasm which many localities in the vicinity of the Mount are well calculated to inspire!

It is not amidst the least singular features of this establishment, that a Mohammedan Mosque should be found near to the Great Church. It is more spacious than many of the chapels, and has a minaret. Various stories were related to me as to the cause of its erection there, but they were all too vague to be worth the trouble of preserving; and

it was evident the monks were neither fond of showing, speaking of, or exhibiting this building to strangers.

Their relics of St. Catherine must have been collected at an early period, for we are informed, that in 1331, William de Baldersell, in the course of his travels in Arabia, visited this monastery. The monks received him with much kindness, and the relics were shown to him. By means of hard beating, we are told they brought out from these remains of mortality a small portion of blood, which they presented to the pilgrim as a gift of singular value; but the circumstance which particularly astonished him, would probably have produced no surprise in a less believing mind. The blood, it appears, had not the appearance of real blood, but of some thick, oily substance; nevertheless, the miracle was regarded by him as one of the greatest that had ever been witnessed in the world.

A few mornings after our arrival we set out for the summit of the mountain. Passing out by a subterranean passage, we entered the garden attached to the monastery. Here we found peaches, apricots, and grapes in great

profusion, and many other fruits and vegetables. The principal part is consumed by the monks, and the remainder is sent to Cairo. The Bedowins formerly scaled the garden walls, and pilfered the greater portion of its contents; but Mohammed Ali having now taken the convent under his protection, the monks are entirely freed from this and other outrages to which they were formerly subjected. We commenced ascending close at the back of the convent by some rude steps which reach from the base to the summit of the mountain; and though much worn from age and the rush of the mountain torrent, they still greatly facilitate the fatiguing and dangerous ascent. After climbing about 500 feet, we halted for a few minutes at a deliciously cool spring of water, and then continued our progress till fatigue again induced us to rest upon a small piece of table-land. This has also its spring, and, growing near it, is a tall cypress, from which pilgrims, as a relic, cut a branch. Our Bedowins called it the summit of Jebel Horeb; and we were here shown a rude chapel, of square form, constructed chiefly of wood, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary—

not far from which stands another rude building of similar dimensions. Both were formerly occupied by the monks; but they are now abandoned, and rapidly falling to decay. In the latter, they pointed to a hole in the rock, which Moses is said to have impressed by retreating backwards, awed by the sight of the Lord. Continuing our route from this halting place by a path still more rugged and steep than before, in about forty-five minutes we arrived at the summit, which is the apex of a peak not more than fifty yards broad at its widest part.

The height of this point has been erroneously estimated at 7200 feet above the convent; but we ascertained its altitude from two points within the sea of 'Akabah; one giving 7530, and the other 7480 above the level of the sea: 2500 feet is its greatest elevation above the convent.

In the eastern side of the platform, which forms the summit, there stands a church, unoccupied and in ruins. It appears to have been constructed with the material of some yet older edifice. Tradition points this out as the spot where Moses received the Deca-

logue; and a small granite column within indicates yet more precisely the identical spot. But we then stood on hallowed ground, and every surrounding object was pregnant with tradition. The massive granite walls of this church have hitherto resisted all the attempts of the Bedowins to destroy them, though the doors and windows have disappeared, and fragments of the marble of which the altar, &c., was constructed is everywhere strewn around. A few yards from this building stands a Mohammedan mosque, which is as much an object of veneration to the followers of the prophet, as the church is to the Christian pilgrim. Between them there is a tank for rain-water, excavated from the naked rock. It is very cold; and, like that on the summit of Jebel Horeb, is purer and sweeter than any I had before tasted. The cliffs around are everywhere covered with the names of those who have at different periods visited this spot. They are mostly in Syriac and Arabic; and several, from extreme age, are nearly illegible. Many travellers who ascended Mount Sinaï have found its summit enveloped in clouds; but I enjoyed the ad-

vantage of a clear, serene atmosphere, and was thereby enabled, by means of angles taken to the hills on the Arabian coast, ninety miles distant, to correctly fix the geographical position of the Mount. The view comprehends a vast circle. The Gulfs of Suez and 'Akabáh were distinctly visible; and from the dark-blue waters of the latter, the Island of Tirán, considered by the ancient geographers as sacred to Isis, rears itself. Mount Agrib, on the other hand, points out "the land of bondage." Before me is St. Catherine, its bare conical peak now capped with snow. In magnificence and striking effect, few parts of the world can surpass the wild, naked scenery everywhere met with in the mountain chain which girds the sea-coast of Arabia. Several years wholly passed in cruising along its shores have rendered all its varieties familiar to me, but I trace no resemblance to any other in that before me: it has a character of its own. Mount Sinaï itself, and the hills which compose the district in its immediate vicinity, rise in sharp, isolated, conical peaks. From their steep and shattered sides huge masses have been splin-

tered, leaving fissures, rather than valleys, between their remaining portions. These form the highest part of the range of mountains that spread out over the peninsula, and are very generally, in the winter months, covered with snow, the melting of which occasions the torrents which everywhere devastate the plains below. The peculiarities of its conical formation render this district yet more distinct from the adjoining heights which appear in successive ridges beyond it, while the valleys which intersect them are so narrow that few can be perceived. No villages and castles, as in Europe, here animate the picture; no forests, lakes, or falls of water, break the silence and monotony of the scene. All has the appearance of a vast and desolate wilderness, either grey, darkly-brown, or wholly black. The feelings of the pilgrim who stands on the summit of Mount Sinaï must be cold indeed, if they remain uninfluenced by the objects before and around him. I know, but heed not, that scepticism has done its best to weaken or destroy the impressions such a locality should naturally inspire. Even if I do not *stand* on that identical spot of our

globe which the presence of the Deity has hallowed once and for ever, I feel I am at least near it; and few, I think, who gaze from its fearful height upon the dreary wilderness below, will fail to be impressed with the fitness of the whole scene for the sublime and awful dispensation which an almost universal tradition declares to have been revealed there.

CHAPTER VI.

Burckhardt's hypothesis—Author's arguments in favour of Jebel Musa—Justinian—Descent towards Mount Horeb—El Eraibein —Rock of Horeb—Moses' Kettle.

BURCKHARDT'S opinion that Jebel Serbal, a mountain to the westward of Jebel Musa, possessed at least rival claims to be the Sinaï of Scripture, has given rise to some controversy. His objections are briefly, that inscriptions are found on Serbal, and not on Mount Sinaï: and he thence concludes it to be the chief place of pilgrimage in the peninsula, and the mountain where Moses received the tables of the law. But surely, with these premises only, he has jumped to a conclusion somewhat hastily. The origin and purport of the inscriptions still remain involved in obscurity. Whether they have been executed by pilgrims to record names and dates, or were inscribed to commemorate other events, is wholly unknown.

Those which this indefatigable traveller found on Serbal, together with the tombs, are most probably anterior to the erection of the convent at Jebel Musa, and may, in the peninsula, where there are numerous others*, denote an ancient place of pilgrimage; but how can it be received as conclusive evidence of its being Mount Sinaï? I should rather suspect that its summit was chosen by the monks as the scene of some miracle or remarkable event recorded in Scripture; and, that that was of no material import, may also, I think, be inferred from its not having been handed down to us either by the records of the Monastery, monkish legends, or Bedowin traditions.

From the character given of Justinian by historians, he appears to have been both learned and devout, and, in short, not likely to expend his treasures or bestow his influence for the support of a fable. It is more than probable he would have sent competent persons to examine the country before the

* Churches and convents, at an early period, were numerous here. Several existed at the ancient city of Feiran—*Deir Segilla*; and the ruins of some others are found in the vicinity of Sinaï.

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erection of the convent; and as we are informed that at the period many devotees resided in this locality, those he commissioned for the purpose, aided probably by oral, as well as written testimony, found less difficulty in tracing out the precise spot, than we, at a more remote period, in the entire absence of the former, and nothing of the latter but what is preserved in Holy Writ, can hope to do.

Advantages of situation connected with the site of the present monastery evidently could not have been the inducement for adopting such a scheme. There is no deficiency of water in other places; it is indeed abundant through every part of Upper Sinaï. It could not have originated in security of position, for the interior is commanded by the hill which rises close to the rear of the building; in short, from no motive of mere choice could it have been selected.

The steps leading to the summit of this mountain, and the appearance of the material of which the present edifice is constructed, indicate extreme antiquity, far beyond the date of the erection of the convent.

For these several reasons, and from a care-

ful perusal of the Scriptures on the spot, now and during a subsequent visit, I am fully convinced that no just grounds exist for depriving Jebel Musá of the sacred reputation with which so many ages have invested it*.

From a very early period some doubts appear to have existed as to the application of the names Sinaï and Horeb; and, if we consult the pages of the several learned travellers who have been in this neighbourhood, we find a number of conflicting opinions have been put forth. By some it has been held that they are merely different names of the same mountain; by others—and in this they are joined by the monks—Horeb is thought to be merely a shoulder of Mount Sinaï. In neither case, however, is it possible to reconcile their opinions with the sense of the several passages where these names are mentioned in Holy Writ; and much confusion has arisen in consequence. After a due consideration of the whole subject, with the Bible as my guide, I

* Referring to page 54, it will be seen that the opinion started as to there not being sufficient space amidst the valleys in the vicinity of Sinaï for the assembled multitudes of the Israelites is most erroneous.

am enabled to arrive at no other conclusion than the one adopted in a recent masterly paper of the Quarterly Review, namely, that the terms "Wilderness of Sinaï" and "Horeb" are synonymous, and were applied to the whole region in the vicinity of the Mount, which, as I have already noticed, stands boldly out by itself, and in its altitude and appearance has little in common with the surrounding mountains.

On comparing Exod. xix. 2, xiv. 2–6, and iii. 6; Deut. ii.; 1 Kings viii. 9, xix. 8; it is impossible there can be any other way in which those passages may be understood or reconciled. Thus the convent at the base of the Mount is in Horeb, and within its walls the spot is pointed out where the miraculous appearance of the burning bush was exhibited. Rephidim too was in Horeb; and, although the existence of water precludes Eraibein, in which the pretended rock of Mareb is exhibited, from that honour, yet there is reason to believe, since it was only one day's journey from Sinaï, that it is in a direction not far removed from it. We can scarcely hope, at this distance of time, to find existing

evidence of the miracle, as we have no warrant for conjecturing that the water flowed for a sufficient length of time to have worn channels or apertures in the stone; and it is very certain little faith can be placed in local traditions. At the same time it is most gratifying to find that, by the reading I have given, these and the several other localities step into their proper places, while many passages of Scripture, before obscure and apparently contradictory, are elucidated. At the same time we are furnished with another strong proof corroborative of the important fact—that, the more minutely these interesting regions are investigated, the more satisfactorily they will establish the scrupulous fidelity of the Sacred Writings.

We now descended towards the summit of Horeb*, passing in our way there a small hollow in the rock, which the Bedowins, by the way of improving on monkish legends, have attributed to the impression of the foot of the Prophet's camel. From hence we descended by a steep path to the convent of El Eraibein, or "Forty Martyrs," situated in a narrow

* I have retained the Bedowin application of this term.

valley, abounding in olive and other fruit-trees, and abundantly watered. The convent is a rude edifice, entirely empty and untenanted. Passing from thence along a glen which yet more nearly contracts its limits, as it skirts the roots of Sinaï, until in many places it is nearly blocked up by the masses detached from it, we, in about half an hour, arrived at the rock of Mareb, from whence water issued when smote by Moses. The fissures corresponding to the number of the tribes are, as Burckhardt suggests, the work of art. Moreover, the Israelites could never have murmured for water in this valley, since it abounds in every part. From hence, on our route to the convent, we were shown a rude seat, formed by a natural recess in the rock, where Moses is said to have seated himself; and also a circular projection which the Bedowins call his kettle. This they have attempted to break, under an impression that it contains treasures.

After spending several very pleasant days at the convent, and partaking freely of the hospitality of its inmates, we returned to the ship.

CHAPTER VII.

SURVEY OF THE GULF OF 'AKABAH.

Rás Furtak—Width of the Channel—Splendid Prospect—Valleys—Description of the Gulf—Ancient Appellations—Diodorus—Remarkable Appearance of the Shore—Indications of bad Weather—Desert Coast—Exploring Expedition—Interview with the Natives—Bedowin Gratitude—Anecdote—Date Groves—Author in danger of being lost—Miraculous Escape—The Survey—Sheïkh of Howeïtát—Dangerous Swell—Breakers—The Bagalá—Arab Helmsman—Reply to Arab Chiefs—Satisfactory Explanation—Seizure of our Pilot—Attempted Extortion—Contempt of Mohammed Ali—Arab Faith—Magnah—Price of Blood—Marriage Ceremony—Quit the Gulf—Myos—Hormus.

On the 4th of January, 1833, we beat through the narrow channel* formed by the island of Tirán and Rás Furtak, into the sea of 'Akabah. Though it blew strong, a couple of native fishing-boats hovered around us, anxious probably to ascertain what object we had in view in prosecuting our researches beyond the route

* About one mile wide at its narrowest part.

of former European vessels. At ten we anchored in a small bay about ten miles from Rás Furtak, and immediately afterwards the wind increased, until, at night, and during the following day, it blew a furious gale. The view we obtained from our anchorage surpassed in magnificence and extent any I had previously witnessed, and its wild and romantic aspect more than compensated for the monotony so characteristic of desert mountain scenery. Here the atmosphere was so remarkably clear and pure, that the outline of the hills on the Egyptian shore, distant one hundred and five miles, appeared as clearly defined as if they had been but ten.

The Gulf of 'Akabah* has the appearance of a narrow deep ravine, extending nearly a hundred miles in a straight direction; and the circumjacent hills rise in some places two thousand feet perpendicularly from the shore. The gulf which fills the bed of this valley has remained for many centuries unknown to Europeans. By the ancients it was styled

* Diodorus Siculus has furnished a good description of this gulf. Let any one, to be satisfied with this, compare his description with modern maps, and then with the result of our survey.

Sinus Elanaticus, from the port of Elan, situated at its northern extremity.

To this day the Arabs are profoundly ignorant of the sea of 'Akabah, and, when looking upwards from our snug anchorage, I view the effects of its boisterous winds in the dangerous swell they create, and the sullen appearance of its dark-blue waters, yet further increased by the high mountains towering on either side, I must admit there is enough to justify the degree of dread they entertain of a voyage up it in their rude boats. Nor must we omit to mention the indifferent character of the Bedowins who inhabit its barren and inhospitable shores.

From the entrance of the straits to our anchorage, and for some distance thence to the northward, the coast is low, sandy, and steril, even beyond the usual desert features of Arabia. The thorny mimosa, which retains its verdure in the most arid parts of the Desert, with no other moisture at the hottest season than what it receives from the night dews, is here quite parched and dry. This arises in a great measure from the violence and bleakness of the wind, which blows the soil, com-

posed, not of sand, but of broken sea-shells and gravel, into ridges, resembling in appearance the waves of the sea. As there is no pasturage, this part of Arabia is but seldom visited by the Bedowins.

The wind, the second day after our arrival, having to appearance moderated, I left the ship in our launch for the purpose of exploring a part of the opposite coast where I was led to expect there were some ruins. After a tempestuous passage—for it proved to be merely a deceitful lull in-shore, and to be blowing with its usual violence outside—we effected a landing at a small date-grove about three miles below the extensive plantation of Nebk. Several Arabs, who from the neighbouring heights had been watching our approach, now joined us, and were very importunate as to the object our vessel had in view in visiting their coast. I believe, although Towárá Bedowins, and more under the immediate control of the Pacha than the other tribes, that their cupidity was excited by what they saw with us, and that our interview might have terminated unpleasantly but for the interference of an old fisherman, whose boat, it appeared,

we had on a former occasion assisted him to repair. Contrary to what I have remarked in the behaviour of some Orientals, especially the Arabs who dwell in towns, and who refer all assistance received from a Christian to the direct interference of Providence, whose mere agent they consider him to be, the Bedowins, and even these fishermen, were at all times exceedingly grateful for any benefactions they received from us. On another occasion we preserved a boat from being wrecked, and, some months afterwards, when Captain Moresby was walking along the beach at Wej-h, an old man accosted him, and, after many salams, stated himself to be the owner of the bark we had rescued. He had brought two sheep and a bag of dollars for the Captain's acceptance; and, to relieve himself from his importunities, he was compelled to accept of the former.

The whole group assembled round us exhibited every appearance of poverty and distress. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, a young girl, about eight years of age, had no other covering than a single piece of tattered cloth thrown over her body; yet

she appeared to suffer little, compared to our stoutest Lascars, who complained bitterly of the cold.

There are no houses either within or near to Tahil and Nebk; and the Arabs merely reside there during the date season. They pay no attention to the cultivation of the trees, which are nevertheless said to be very productive. Ten or twelve of these palms grow within a few feet of each other, with a clear space in the centre, frequently occupied by the Bedowins, and serving also to shelter their flocks from the piercing winds prevailing during the winter months. The luxuriance and dark aspect of the foliage of these clumps singularly contrast with the glare and bleak aspect of the surrounding landscape. The part of the coast occupied by these groves sinks towards the margin of the sea, but from thence it rises in a gradual slope to the first range of hills, distant about five miles. They are of schistose formation, and rise to an elevation of about seven hundred feet.

By spreading a boat's sail over the trunks of two of the date-trees, we sheltered ourselves

in some measure from the violence of the blast which swept over us during the night; but its fury made me apprehensive at times that the trees would be torn from their roots.

The wind, which had lulled in the morning, again menaced as we drew towards the centre of the sea. At length, in a strong gust, although under close-reefed sails, the boat heeled over and filled. I had but a moment in which to act: I used it decisively: the boat was put before the wind ere another billow could give it the *coup de grace;* and then, by baling with our hats, &c., we succeeded in getting her free. We were prevented from sinking by the buoyancy of our fresh-water casks, of which we always carried eight or ten as ballast. When the blast struck us, the Lascars raised a yell of mingled agony and fear; and our situation, many miles from the ship and the shore, appeared so desperate, that our hardy pilot, who had been steering, let go the helm, addressed a short prayer to Mohammed, and quietly resigned himself to his fate. Indeed, our escape may be considered as almost miraculous, for it afterwards appeared that Captain Moresby, anxious for

our safety, had despatched a man to the mast-head, who saw, but immediately afterwards lost sight of us, and he consequently concluded that we had again borne up for the shore; so that, had the boat failed to sink under us, which, under all circumstances, would have been most desirable, we should have drifted out to sea, with the certainty that a lingering death by hunger and thirst awaited us. The greatest care was necessary in bringing her through the high breaking waves we encountered afterwards, although a most excellent boat, and built expressly for such a service; and, I am not ashamed to acknowledge, it was with great pleasure that I again found myself on the deck of the Palinurus.

The nature of Captain Moresby's orders did not admit of his taking the vessel up to 'Akabah. Government contemplated making an attempt to carry on the survey in boats; and, as the weather would compel them in their progress to communicate occasionally with the Bedowins on either shore, Captain Moresby, in passing Mowílahh, had despatched a boat to bring from thence Sheïkh

'Aláyán of the Howeitát tribe, whose authority is acknowledged in these regions. He arrived to-day, and, after receiving several presents, proceeded by land to Magnah, where he was to await our arrival, and then concert measures for our further progress.

The wind having in some measure taken off, we shook hands with those on board, and started in our bugalá. However, in the middle of the night the gale returned with all its former fury, and we were compelled, at a great risk, to stand in towards the shore, and seek an anchorage amidst the rocks. The following morning we reached to within eight miles of Magnah, with a light wind; but beyond that, we only succeeded by persevering through a violent gale and some of the most dangerous seas I have ever encountered. The best ship's boat which ever swam would not have lived five minutes in the swell we encountered. It was literally a sea of breakers; for, as the wind increased, the waves rose in long parallel ridges, so hollow and deep, and following each other in such rapid succession, that, although our bugalá had been selected for her superior qualities as a sea-boat, long

enured to the perilous navigation of the Red Sea, and was navigated by old Seroor, deservedly accounted the most skilful as well as undaunted seaman that ever sailed upon its waters, we were several times in most imminent danger. At these moments, the sturdy old helmsman stood with his head bared, his few grey locks streaming in the breeze, and his face completely drenched with the spray that incessantly dashed over the boat. In this manner, he directed our course with admirable skill and coolness over seas and through violent gusts that menaced us with destruction. To the spectator, who contemplated our progress from a place of safety, this scene could not fail of presenting a striking and admirable picture of human skill successfully contending against the fury of the raging elements. At length we arrived at Magnah, where Sheïkh 'Aláyán received us on the beach with much cordiality, and assigned a hut for our residence.

The morning repast being concluded, we paid him a complimentary visit. After passing through an enclosure where camels, asses, and other cattle had been stabled, our conductor ushered us into a low dirty hovel, the

roof and sides of which were constructed with cadjans*, and was divided into two equal portions by a screen of cotton cloth, behind which was the harem, as we were soon made sensible of by the appearance of a pair of black eyes peeping through some rent or other aperture. Here sat the Sheïkh, reclining on a camel-saddle, their ordinary cushion, with about twenty armed Bedowins squatted around him. He did not rise to receive us as we entered—a bad omen, as he observed that ceremony when any of his relatives joined the party. The most profound silence was observed by all but the Sheïkh, who, after the customary compliments, entered on the subject of our journey, and swore by his beard he would fulfil all he had promised on board. During our conference a meal was prepared, to which, as his followers sat down, the Sheïkh invited us; but, pleading our recent repast, we were released from partaking of no very inviting fare. An immense pile of boiled beans, rice, and flour, mixed together, and deluged with an abundance of butter, was brought in on a large round dish. Of this the whole

* The dried branches of the date-palm.

assembly partook with much relish, but the Sheïkh was served of the same in a separate dish. In the mean time coffee had been preparing at a circular fire-place, round which the guests, as they completed their repast, seated themselves; and, after pipes, we returned to our hut, apparently on the best of terms with the Sheïkh.

During the day, we received visits from different Sheïkhs, who were very solicitous to ascertain our object. Our answer to all was, that our government being on terms of amity with Mohammed Ali, had, with his sanction, determined to examine and explore the Red Sea; so that in the event of the French again making an attempt to wrest Egypt from the Ottoman sway, the English might be enabled to despatch vessels up it without experiencing the same losses as on a former expedition. This explanation appeared generally to satisfy them; since, as we walked about during the day, all we met behaved with civility, and our cigars were in great request. In answer to a question whether he had been at Mecca, a hill Bedowin replied in the negative, and with much simplicity, inquired

how often I had been there. In these remote districts, I am induced to believe the distinctions of Mussulman and Christian are scarcely known, or at all events, not heeded.

Our slumbers were disturbed about midnight, by intelligence that the Sheïkh had seized our pilot, and intended, by so doing, to extort more money, in addition to what had been already procured, for extending his protection to us.

We passed the whole of next day in negotiating with the Sheïkh. When threatened with the Pacha's vengeance, he replied, by telling us we might go to the "Sooltan" if we pleased; that he feared neither the one nor the other, and was determined to keep the man until his demand for two hundred dollars, which he averred Seroor had promised him, was complied with. We had reason to believe that the elders of the tribe opposed this open violation of his word by every argument in their power, for they were considerably excited when he told us we might leave without him; and we asked the question if, under such circumstances, he would have abandoned a follower; remarking, at the same

time, that the high opinion Europeans had hitherto entertained of Bedowin honor and hospitality would no longer exist after such an outrage when under their protection.

The success of Mohammed Ali's army in the Hedjaz was at this time doubtful, the insurrection at Jiddah had also weakened his authority, and 'Aláyán was encouraged in his knavery by the general opinion that Mohammed Ali was in a fair way to meet the usual fate of a rebel Pacha.

With this specimen of the faith of an Arab Sheïkh, and expecting Sheïkh Mugbúl every hour, who was to have passed us on to 'Akabah, and who might also have had a desire to fleece us, Captain Moresby deemed it most advisable to satisfy the demand and return to the ship. But it must be understood, however, that in complying with such an act of robbery, we had no means to prevent or punish it, for here there is no anchorage, and the Sheïkh had no other town, or any boats on which we could retaliate.

Magnah is nothing more than an extensive date plantation, occupied by seven or eight different tribes. Of these, the Omran Ho-

weïtát, and Ugboot, possess the largest shares. The trees extend along the bottom of a narrow valley, which bears a striking resemblance to that of Ainúnah. A considerable stream of water flows through and irrigates the groves, and fences divide the trees into circular groups, accessible only by a diminutive door two feet in height: within, wheat, dhorra, and some few fruits* and vegetables are reared.

Near the beach there are about two hundred huts, occupied by those who cultivate the trees and reside here permanently; but the Bedowins, to whom the greater number of trees belong, arrive with their tents at the commencement of the date harvest, and continue only until its conclusion. A promiscuous multitude of three or four thousand are then assembled, among whom quarrels and disputes constantly occur. These, if not decided on the spot, are referred to the principal Sheïkhs; but the parties always retain a right of appeal to the elders of any neighbouring tribe. The custom of the relatives of the slain retaliating on the slayer or

* Grapes, limes, figs.—Nebek, &c.

his kindred is, as in other parts of Arabia, in full force here. By this barbarous custom, murder, which all civilized states treat as an offence against the public, becomes here a private wrong. The evils of such a system are sufficiently evident, for quarrels being thus transmitted from a single individual to a whole tribe, some of the most merciless and sanguinary wars recorded by the Arabian authors have originated in no other source. Burckhardt gives many curious details of the compensation occasionally accepted, which, in the language of the country, is styled "the price of blood."

Amidst the poorer classes a very simple form of marriage prevails here. The father, in the presence of the daughter, demands if the suitor is willing to receive her as his wife, and his answer in the affirmative is sufficiently binding; a small piece of wood is sometimes presented by the father, and worn by the bridegroom for several weeks after his marriage. In the date season the Bedowins exercise their national hospitality to its fullest extent. A stranger who then arrives from any quarter is supplied with provisions during

his stay: it is to be regretted our visit did not take place at this time, as some curious information respecting the habits of these remote tribes might then have been collected.

On a hill near the extremity of the date grove there are some ruins. The walls are massive, and the building, which has probably served as a fort, is of some antiquity. At Mahárehi Sho'aïb, and at Beden, the former estimated at five and a half, the latter seven and a half hours' journey, there are other ruins. I had planned an excursion to them, but was prevented from going by what has already been narrated.

Quitting the Gulf of 'Akabah for the present, Captain Moresby proceeded to complete the survey of a portion of the Egyptian shore contiguous to the ancient port of Myos Hormus: we commenced our operations at ——, where we found a hill abounding in sulphur. No one was at present employed here; but three years since, Mohammed Ali is said to have drawn a large supply from it. During our stay, I received full confirmation of a fact I had previously doubted when related by the Arabs. During the late gales the weather

proved intensely cold; for the hills on the Egyptian coast over which it blew were covered for more than half their height with snow. At this period, the fish in the shallow water are driven by the force of the winds and waves upon the beach, and furnish an ample supply of food to the Bedowins; for the dryness of the atmosphere prevents their decay for many days. After a long continuance of north-westerly breezes at Yembo and Jiddah, the fish thus obtained forms the principal support of the poor *.

Entering by a winding and intricate pas-

* Mr. St. John, in his "Travels in the Valley of the Nile," describes some similar appearances on the shores of Lake Mœris. "When we had reached the beach," says he, "both sight and smell were struck by prodigious numbers of dead fish, which having, as the natives afterwards informed us, recently perished through cold, had been driven on shore by a tempestuous north wind. The quantity was incredible, lining the shore as far as the eye could reach, as if a multitude of fishermen had just emptied their nets there. They were exceedingly varied in form and size; some measuring nearly five feet in length, and of more than proportionate thickness; and of these, many hundreds lay among the smaller fry in the mud, while others were scarcely larger than a herring. In general, the larger were close to the water, the smaller in many instances having been carried by the waves twenty or thirty yards inland. The stench arising from so great a quantity of fish putrefying in the sun was almost insupportable, and must have communicated a pestilential quality to the atmosphere."—Vol. ii., p. 246.

sage, we anchored about 300 yards from the ruins of Myos Hormus, and, on landing, found nothing but a small fort, 150 paces in length, and 120 in breadth, enclosing a few small houses. Towers of a square form have been erected at the angles; and, on the northern and western sides, equi-distant from these, the remains of arched gateways are visible. The whole of this building was most probably founded about the time of the Caliphs, to whom, as to the Greeks, the advantage of good water in the vicinity of its port rendered Myos Hormus a valuable station *. It is now, however, wholly abandoned. From hence we proceeded to Cosseir, where we found instructions awaiting us to complete the survey of the Gulf of 'Akabah in the ship.

* The ancient authors enumerate three islands, probably Shadwan, Pilot's Island, and Jobal, which occupied this port; and its position was further indicated by a red rock, which glistened so as to dazzle the eye of the spectator; but of this we saw nothing.

CHAPTER VIII.

Quit Kosaïr, and re-enter the Gulf of 'Akabah-Magnah—Escape from Shipwreck—Dangerous anchorage—Sherm Majowik Bugalá—The Pilot and his Sons—Extraordinary swell accounted for—Perilous situation of the Palinurus—Variety and temperature of Winds—Mode of obtaining anchorage—Soundings—Anecdote—Difficult anchorage—Arrival at Jejerat Pharun.

FROM Kosaïr we again proceeded, and repassed the Straits of 'Akabah with a moderate southerly wind, which bid fair to carry us some distance on our voyage; but it failed us about ten o'clock, near to Magnah, abreast of which, in order to show ourselves to our old friends, we burnt a blue light. Being close in-shore, our unexpected appearance with the vessel must have greatly surprised them, and their watch-fires plainly indicated that they now perceived us. About an hour after midnight, the wind shifted to the north-east, with every appearance of blowing wea-

ther. We were then about mid-channel, and immediately stood over to the Sinaï shore, the beach or surf of which we were anxious to sight, in order to stretch across with the greater confidence on the other tack. This manœuvre, though not unattended with risk, became necessary, because the appearance of the mountains, rising up abruptly from the sea on either hand, is so deceptive, that in a dark night it is impossible to ascertain their distance with any degree of confidence; and there are no soundings at any known depth, even at a distance of a few yards from the shore, to denote our approach to it. For this purpose, we had several people stationed on the fore-yard looking out, while our indefatigable commander was on the fore-castle. Suddenly he observed and pointed out to the pilots a white appearance, followed by a break in the water, close under the bows; but they conceived it to be merely a meeting of the tides. Unconvinced, Captain Moresby sprung up the fore-rigging, and immediately discovered it to be a reef; at the same instant rocks were perceived under the ship's bottom. She was now kept away a few yards, and

the water being tolerably smooth, we let go two anchors in three fathoms. She then swung round, and we had no bottom under the stern at eighty fathoms. Had the ship fetched a few yards further to the northward, or had the Captain's vigilance slumbered for an instant, nothing could have saved us from destruction; and, with the impression of our narrow escape still on our minds, we viewed with some anxiety the precarious nature of our anchorage. We were on the verge of a steep bank or precipice, from whence, in case our anchors had dragged, we should have been again away with our bagalá,—whether to drift on other rocks to leeward, or to proceed again on an unknown sea, with wind and sea both increasing, was equally uncertain. The scene will not readily be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

Through the gloom of a dark night, yet further increased by a musky haze, we could perceive, towering far above the mast-heads of the vessel, a huge perpendicular range of mountains, against the base of which, apparently within a few yards of us, the surf was beating with that hoarse and sullen roar

which it utters when tumbling headlong into caverns, fretted and worn by its former frantic violence. On such a coast, the stoutest vessel ever constructed by the hands of man must, within a few minutes after striking, have been shivered and strewn alongside of it. As if to contrast with the gloom above, the sea had now acquired that phosphorescent quality* which causes its waters, when agitated, to emit lambent flashes and coruscations; so that, what with the blaze created by the constant breaking of the sea, and the broad beams of light which followed each successive gust that swept down, tearing up the water in sheets in its progress, the whole had the appearance of a vast lake illumined with indescribable brilliancy.

At daylight, the event occurred which we had anticipated. The vessel drove off, fortunately canting with her head off shore, with thirty fathoms on one chain, and eighty fathoms on the other, both large and heavy: we had, it may be supposed, enough of diffi-

* Naturalists are much divided in opinion as to the cause of the phenomenon. It is of frequent, often of nightly, occurrence within the tropics; but I never witnessed its brilliancy on any other occasion equal to this.

culty in heaving up our anchors. Indeed, our Captain was more than once inclined to slip, in which case we should again have been compelled to leave the sea. At length, however, after much labour, we got them up to the bows, and bore away for Sherm Majowwík. Of this we knew nothing but from the report of a fisherman we had hired as pilot, who described it as capacious and easy of access; but, on approaching the shore, we perceived from the mast-head that the entrance was exceedingly narrow, and, in consequence of the sea being one sheet of foam, that small space could only be discerned when some huge breakers burst high over the rocks on either side. Its width we afterwards ascertained to be 100 yards. From her peculiar construction, our brig steered but wildly; and the seaman, without further description, will comprehend the extremity of the danger we encountered, before a hard gale, and a tremendous high sea setting right across it. Nothing, therefore, would have warranted the attempt, but a full conviction that our bagalá would be swamped should we remain out, without, in the event of such an accident oc-

curring, the possibility of our rendering her the slightest assistance. It was with difficulty we could carry a close-reefed topsail on the cap; one of our quarter boats was stove in; the gale increased rapidly; and a heavy billow more than once struck the bagalá with such force, that, though secured astern with a long tow-rope, she flew before it abreast of our gangway. Then it was that she appeared in most imminent danger; for, had the rope caught the rudder, or by inattention to steering she had broached-to, the next wave would have filled and sunk her; and more than once, on these occasions, the cry was raised that she had gone. The feelings of Serúr, our pilot, must have undergone a severe trial, for his five sons were in the boat; but the stout-hearted old man permitted no other sign of a parent's anxiety to escape him, than by occasionally uttering a short prayer for their safety. Yet his was not that apathy and indifference to immediate and pressing danger which characterises his countrymen and Oriental fatalists in general. With the keenest and fullest sense of their perilous situation, he watched as carefully over the

pilotage of the vessel on her approach to, and passage through, the reef, as if the ship, and not his boat and children, had been the object of his solicitude. It was true he did not often trust himself to look at her; and there were few among us who could endure more than an occasional hurried glance. Within the bay the water was smooth; and here, with two anchors ahead, we were left to console ourselves for our second attempt to reach 'Akabah.

It was, however, during the four days we remained there (the gale, especially at night, blowing with such violence that we could have carried no canvass to it), some consolation to reflect that we had been saved in a dark night from encountering, in an unknown and narrow sea, its full fury, by the reef which, in the first instance, had so nearly proved our destruction.

Within the Gulf it is not difficult to trace the causes of the unusual violence of the wind, nor the high and dangerous swell which it creates. On looking over a map of this portion of the globe, we perceive that one straight and continuous valley extends from the Dead

Sea to the entrance of the Sea of 'Akabah. The northerly wind, which prevails during the greater part of the year, naturally takes the direction of this valley. Finding no other outlet, however, than its southern termination, it acquires there its extraordinary force and strength; and although the body of water exposed to its influence is not greater than in some large rivers, yet, having none of their sinuosities, the course of its waves is unintercepted to the entrance of the straights, and finding but a small outlet, the water returns by a violent effort in a powerful current. Those who have witnessed the effects of a rapid tide contending against an equally strong swell will be at no loss to imagine the same effects operating on a larger scale from similar causes in the Sea of 'Akabah. Our friends the Arabs were watching our progress with much interest; for the morning after we anchored, two boys came on board, who confessed that the object of their visit was to ascertain if we had not been wrecked in the gale. What a god-send such an event would have been to these poor tribes! Nor, considering their abject condition, let us view

their intentions as involving any flagrant enormity. "The wreckers" of our own country have not this excuse to plead.

On the fifth day from our anchoring here, the wind being lulled, we weighed at midnight, and again, with a light breeze, stood up the Sea. The water was smooth, and the current, which naturally follows a cessation of the breeze, swept us rapidly along. I have before remarked the difficulty which we found in this Gulf in estimating distances at night. The heavens were beautifully clear; the land did not appear nearer than we desired; there was no sound of breakers; and when the day dawned, we were not a little surprised to find that for some distance the vessel had been drifting along apparently within a hundred yards of the broad band of reef which girts the shore. It was fortunate we encountered no projecting point.

At noon we again passed Magnah; and, shortly before sunset, arrived abreast of Daháb, where we were desirous of remaining for the night; but, from the mast-head, could discover no anchorage. We therefore stood on, the wind still continuing light. At seven

P.M. Captain Moresby went ahead in one of the quarter-boats to seek for anchorage, which he found under the lee of a patch of rocks about two miles distant. He then hoisted a light, and we made the best of our way towards him. The wind was then exceedingly fitful and variable, there being puffs occasionally from the north-east. The hills also appeared hazy, and heavy-looking clouds hung over their summits. I was most anxious to get our boat on board, as, our doing so after the gale had once set in, seemed exceedingly doubtful. Fortunately, about nine o'clock, we reached her, and came-to in three fathoms, with seventy fathoms of chain. Under our stern there was no bottom. We had anchored, therefore, as before, on the edge of a steep reef, and could discern, through the haze of the night, a steep point extending to seaward, but nothing more. At midnight, the north-east gale returned with all its former fury. The sound it produced on the water, as it came tearing along towards us, resembled that of the "bore*." We cut away our spare

* This effect, common to many rivers of the eastern as well as the western hemisphere, is produced by the tide forcing its way

and sheet anchors, and veered on all our chains.

At daylight, affairs wore a serious aspect. The ship was anchored under a reef of rocks, in some degree sheltered by a point, distant about a mile and a half. But as the wind increased, the swell continued to get higher; and it soon became apparent, if the vessel should drive off the bank, and cant with her head in-shore, that she must go to pieces. The coast was similar to that which I have before described—a steep precipice of smooth, grey granite, having, on a level with the surface of the water, a short, narrow projecting ridge of rocks, against which the sea was lashing and foaming with much fury. Our chains were therefore all unshackled, and the ends kept on deck in readiness. Boats were secured; and all necessary preparations made either for slipping or encountering the breeze. Our bagalá, also, was despatched nearer the shore, so that, if again

between banks which suddenly contract their width. In such situations the water rushes onwards with terrific impetuosity in an accumulated mass several feet in height, accompanied by a deafening noise.

drifted off, we should have been unincumbered with her.

During the three following days, the breeze still continuing strong but not so violent as that we experienced in Sherm Majowwík, I made an excursion into the interior, but saw nothing worthy of remark. We weighed at daylight, and stood towards the Arabian shore for an anchorage, which our pilot had described as sufficiently capacious; but were again döomed to disappointment, for, upon approaching, we discovered it to be not larger than would accommodate a boat. We therefore returned to the Sinaï side. In our passage the winds were very inconstant, shifting suddenly from contrary points of the compass, as the current swept through the valleys on either shore. At times they felt sultry, and again a cooler gust succeeded, that sunk a Fahrenheit's thermometer fifteen degrees. More than once they were observed to be blowing in one direction from the mast-head, and from a contrary quarter below; and Leslie's hygrometer, on these occasions, sometimes varied from 10° to 55°.

About sunset a low sandy point, under

which we expected to find anchorage, bore north-by-east distant about eight miles. Captain Moresby again went ahead in the cutter, with a lantern; but the wind continued so light and baffling, that we did not reach the anchorage its rays pointed out until midnight. Weighing on the following morning about noon from our anchorage, we passed a small island on the eastern shore called Homaïdah, and soon afterwards entered the capacious bay of Goobut Homaïdah, at the extremity of which there were a few date-trees and some rude huts. Here we found no bottom fifty yards from the beach with two hundred fathoms of line; but, being desirous not to remain at sea during the night, and there being no appearance of a southerly wind, to which we were wholly exposed, we ran the brig close to the rocks, and let go the anchor on them. Several Bedowins now came on board, bringing sheep for sale. They were all of the Omrán tribe, but I have rarely seen a greater variety of feature than their countenances exhibited: some were darker and their limbs more slender than the southern tribes, while others appeared fairer and more

fleshy. The latter are mountaineers, inhabiting the lofty chain which towers above us; the former reside on the sea-coast, where the poorness of their diet of course contributes to their meagre appearance. Their character with the neighbouring Bedowins is held in great disrepute. A few years ago a large bagalá found its way from Jiddah to this point. Some quarrel having occurred in the caravan route, her arrival was a speculation to supply the towns of Syria with coffee from this point; but, after the conveyance of the bales had been agreed on, and the last bale was landed, the Sheïkh decamped and shared the whole with his followers. The recollection of this event is still urged by their neighbours as a reproach on the good faith of its perpetrators. A small bagalá, the wreck of which we saw at Magnah, has alone since ventured up the Gulf of 'Akabah.

Towards sunset a southerly breeze sprung up, and the ship swung round on the rocks. Fortunately we found bottom outside in sixty fathoms, by which we were enabled to warp her a few yards from them; but, if the breeze had freshened, we must inevitably have

gone to pieces. The Bedowins we had on board at the time the wind shifted carried the intelligence to the shore, and they there, amidst the towering crags above us, assembled in great numbers. From the preparations they were making, it appeared doubtful if they would await the vessel's wreck ere they attacked us: had they done so, we must have lost a great many men, as their elevated position gave the party complete command of our decks, and the rocks placed them beyond the reach of our fire. The guns however were loaded, and all was in readiness to do our best. From this unpleasant predicament we were released towards the morning by the springing up of the land-breeze. We had barely cleared the point of the bay ere a strong southerly gale set in, and we ran before it to an anchorage formed by a small island on the Sinaï side, Jezirat Pharoun (Pharaoh's Isle), and the main. Our good fortune did not desert us here. The breeze, after anchoring, increased to a gale; the channel was not more than a hundred yards in width; the swell rolled high into it, and our stern was not more than thirty yards from the rocks on

the main. A short lull enabled us however to warp and drop our anchor closer to the island, where we were more sheltered: in doing so our hawser parted, and, before the sheet-anchor could be cut away, we were yet nearer the rocks. A second attempt proved more successful. Save Sherm Majowwík, every anchorage in our progress up the sea was exposed to these southward breezes in a similar manner to our last; and, had it set in before, our destruction would have been certain. I now dismiss, with unfeigned pleasure, all further allusion to our nautical mishaps: four years in the Red Sea, amidst the numerous reefs with which its waters are studded, having rendered the perils of its navigation familiar to us, I have not dwelt on them; but in this Gulf, in a course of only ninety miles, the incidents are so numerous and varied, that I trust the reader will pardon my prolixity.

CHAPTER IX.

Ruins and ancient Importance of Jezi·at Pharoun—Solitary Aspect of the Gulf—Modern 'Akabah, its Soil, Fruits, &c.—Correctness of Rüppel's Chart—Arab Casting-net—Fish—Coral Belt—The "White-Veiled" Cape—Effects of Southerly Wind—Naweïbi—Luxuriant Verdure—Charcoal Burners—Sagacity of Arab Thief-takers—Sherm Dchâb, or Golden Port—Remarkable Appearance of the Ibex—Dates—Termination of our second Survey—Conveyance of Packets and Passengers—Burckhardt—Tirân—Hyænas—Fish—Senáfer—Snakes—Description of the Coast—Aïnúnah—Leuké Kômé—Haweïtát Bedowins.

Upon landing we found Jezirat Pharoun*, a small islet, divided into two rounded hillocks, severally rising to the height of one hundred and fifty feet, and connected by a flat isthmus. The whole is encompassed by a massive wall, having square towers at each angle. Both these mounds are strewn with ruins. Round the summit of the northern is another wall, enclosing a space three hundred and sixty feet in length and ninety in breadth, which

* El Graa of Laborde.

approaches occasionally so close to the precipice as to appear merely a continuation of it. Where it remained entire, it was thirty feet in height and six feet in thickness. The upper part is turreted, and there are some openings resembling embrasures, as well as numerous loopholes. Within this area the surface of the hill is covered with many square buildings, separated from each other by thick walls. Entering one of these edifices by a small door in the upper part, we descended by narrow steps to a vaulted chamber, the roof of which was supported by two arches, resting in the centre on a Doric column. This building and the entrance on the north-eastern side are of freestone, but the rest of the pile has been rudely constructed of unhewn stones, cemented by a coarse mortar. Scattered amidst the rubbish we found fragments of marble entablatures and pillars, and may thence conclude that these remains occupy the site of some edifice more ancient and costly than the present. The southern hillock presents an undistinguishable mass of ruins. We could find no water on any part of the island; but on the northern mound some extensive tanks

have with great labour been excavated from the rock. These must of course have depended on the rains for their supply.

On the isthmus which connects the hillocks there are two rows of small square buildings, having a lagoon extending to them, which, though now choked up with sand, appears to have formerly answered as a harbour.

Bedowin tradition ascribes these works to Saladhin; but there is reason to believe the station from the very earliest period must have been of great importance; for, unless, as in some parts of the Mediterranean, they had artificial harbours at the time this line of communication was adopted, there is no other spot where the bark of the merchant could have found shelter. Should war or pestilence ever intercept the intercourse through Egypt, it may again be necessary to adopt this, the oldest, but now almost forgotten, route; in which case, Jezirat Pharoun would be invaluable as a coal depôt*.

From the summit of the island the prospect

* A Roman road formerly extended from 'Akabah to Ghaza, and the direct distance between the two seas is only one hundred and twenty miles.

is less gloomy than at the lower part of the Gulf. Instead of bold naked precipices, rising abruptly from the sea, we have here a succession of sandy capes, sweeping into the waves at nearly the same angle; their inclination being the same as the valleys of which they are but a continuation. Calm, and without a cloud to overshadow its now tranquil bosom, no traces are exhibited of the fury with which, but a few hours previous, it had been agitated. Neither boats nor vessels animate the picture, and it has the appearance of a vast and solitary lake. On the other hand, beyond the extremity of the Gulf, we obtain an extensive view of the valley of El Ghor. For some distance it resembles a broad plain dotted with trees; but the mountains which bound it continue, as in the Sea of 'Akabah, in a straight direction, and the Gulf is therefore merely a prolongation of the valley, and they form, thus united, a bolder, more extensive, and more regular feature than can probably be paralleled in any other portion of the globe.

At a short distance to the southward of the castle the pass was pointed out to us from

whence 'Akabah takes its name. Steep and dangerous, it is much dreaded by the Bedowins, who lose a number of camels in crossing it. Not far from this is the Kasser el Bedowi, now deserted, but formerly occupied by the Bedowins. Here, I am told, there is a chain extending from the shore to a pier built in the sea.

Modern 'Akabah is supposed to occupy the site of the ancient towns of Ailah, Elana, and Assouan; and D'Anville and other geographers place there the ports of Elath and Esiongeber. Ports it is certain there are none; and their ruins have all passed away: so that 'Akabah is now alone remarkable for its castle and date-grove. The former is situated amidst the trees, one hundred and fifty yards from the beach, and about two miles and a half from the extremity of the Gulf. Within, there are a few cadjan huts, occupied by Bedowins; and the walls, thirty feet high, are constructed in alternate bands of red and white stones. It is garrisoned by about forty Maghrebínjee* soldiers; but its security depends more on the name of Mohammed Ali

* Barbareque Arabs.

than any fear the Bedowins entertain of these men. Corn to supply the Hajj caravan, in its progress from Cairo to Mecca, is lodged here; and at the period of its visit, Bedowins assemble from all quarters to dispose of their sheep and butter to the pilgrims. They are a wild untractable race, much addicted to pilfering; and have occasionally given the Egyptian pachas much trouble. The principal date-grove is about a mile in length; another, almost as long, lies in the direction of Wádi-el-Arabá; and there are several, still more extensive, to the southward. Water is everywhere plentiful and good; fruits and vegetables abound; and all indicates that the soil retains a portion of that fertility which called forth the eulogiums of the earlier Arabian authors.

During our stay here we had but few opportunities of investigating the surrounding country, for we were unprovided with a firman, and Captain Moresby was apprehensive the natives might, as at Magnah, seize and demand a heavy ransom for us. Our not having done so is however of little importance, since this portion of the globe has been

minutely investigated by Laborde and Rüppel. It would be unjust, while mentioning the latter traveller's name, to withhold the tribute due to him for the correctness of his chart of the Gulf. Before its publication we had not one which was even tolerable; and if our survey, in a practical sense, has rendered his of less importance, yet, in a scientific point of view, its value will be enhanced by the stamp of fidelity with which our labours have invested it.

There are no boats of any description near 'Akabah; and, from the violent gusts to which its local features subject it, I doubt if any but very large vessels could live there. The Bedowins procure their fish on the rocks which gird the shore. On either hand, a flat platform extends out for several yards, having but two or three feet water on it, beyond which, it sinks perpendicularly to an almost unfathomable depth. Along this they creep stealthily, with their cast-net over the left arm. Its form is round, and loaded at the lower part with small pieces of lead; and, when the fisherman approaches a shoal of fish, his art consists in throwing the net so that it may

expand itself in a circular form before it reaches the surface of the water.

There is a great variety of fish here; the Summach el Arabi, a species of mullet, we found to be excellent; shell-fish abound, and from the heaps everywhere seen on the shore, appear to form a considerable article of their food.

Having completed our examination of the northern portion of the Gulf, we proceeded to the southward. Our track appears in the map: at Hágool, on the Arabian shore, we found a small boat harbour, much exposed to the northerly winds; here there is also an extensive date-grove. In passing, we saw several Bedowins with their sheep and camels, but did not land to hold communication with them.

Rás Abú Bourka, or the Cape with the White Veil, is so called from a remarkable patch of light-coloured sand which renders it discernible from a great distance. Thence we proceeded to the small islet of Omasír, on the Arabian shore, which has nothing peculiar in its appearance or formation. From some Bedowins who came down on the fol-

lowing morning abreast the vessel, we received several sheep. On board, their demeanour was very quiet, but on their passage to the shore, they contrived to quarrel and fight about the articles they had received in exchange. A southerly wind setting in on this sea produces a singular effect: the first intimation we received of its approach arose from witnessing the dust and sand from the shore on the lower part of the sea carried up in clouds, resembling in form and appearance the smoke produced immediately after the discharge of a number of pieces of cannon. As these rolled onwards, they gradually expanded until the whole range of mountains on the Sinaï side was hidden from view. The sand on these occasions is nearly impalpable, and so subtle, that it is with difficulty we prevent its reaching the works of our chronometers. None of the humidity observable in other portions of the Red Sea with a southerly wind is experienced here; but on the contrary, the air is parched and dry.

Naweïbí, on the opposite, that is to say, the Sinaï shore, was our next station; where there is a narrow slip of land covered with

date trees: beyond this, the country rises with a gradual, sandy slope, to the distance of two miles, when it meets the lower undulations of the mountains. The same remarkable colouring on the hills is observed here, as at Sherm. Some are of a deep-blue tinge, and others streaked with a brilliant red and violet colour. From our anchorage, this variety of tints produced a singular appearance. Some rain which had lately fallen had completely changed the aspect of this part of the coast; shrubs, and grass of a lively green, everywhere meet the gazer's eye. The territories of the Terábin Bedowins, who share the produce of these groves with the Heïwát tribes, extends beyond 'Akabah, and across the peninsula, including the mountains, to the Sea of Suez. Large quantities of fine charcoal is manufactured by them from the branches of the acacia, which are here very numerous, and they take it to Cairo for sale. The foliage of the date trees appears so clustering, that it is difficult to conceive how they get at the fruit. No care is required in tending them, and the trunks of such as decay, or have

been blown down, remain where they have fallen. Intermixed with the trees, there were some rude huts, about eight feet square, constructed with loose stones. We found no inhabitants, but within them were several articles, useful or necessary to this simple people,—a fact which speaks much for the general honesty of these tribes.

In cases of robbery, it is said the Bedowins are able by the impression of their footsteps to distinguish if the plunderers belong to their own, or to a neighbouring tribe. I have often had reason to admire their sagacity in this respect. Two of our Lascars deserted from the ship at Suez, but although the road was well beaten, the Bedowins traced them, and brought them back.

After the dates are gathered, they are placed in circular enclosures about six feet high, constructed of cadjans and mud; here they remain until the sun's rays have perfectly dried them; they are then packed in skins and transported to other warehouses.

A very remarkable appearance is produced on the opposite shore by the valleys, which

rise between the mountains in a solid slope of sand, to the height of two thousand feet. The intermediate coast presents a steep wall, rising in many places six thousand feet; the surface is dark, veined with numerous traces of torrents of a lighter colour, every where intersecting it.

Nearly abreast of Magnah, is Mersá Daháb, "the Golden Port," where we remained at anchor several days. Some geographers, with much show of probability, seek to identify it with Esiongeber; and it certainly is the only well-sheltered harbour in the Sea. Its peculiar formation adds additional strength to the supposition; for a semicircular belt of coral nearly surrounds it, on which the lapse of ages has deposited a thin layer of sand but a few inches above the level of the water.

Might not this have been the ledge of rocks on which Jehosaphat's fleet* was wrecked,

* Jehosaphat and Ahaziah fitted out a joint fleet at Esiongeber, which consisted of ten sail, and was destined to visit Ophir for gold; but on leaving port, it was wrecked on the ledge of rocks from whence Esiongeber received its name.

This ridge of rocks was covered by the sea at high water: when it was low, it appeared at intervals in a line, and gave the name of Esiongeber, or "back-bone."—2 Kings, xxx. 36 and 37.

and described as being covered by the sea at high water, and at low appearing at intervals, and whence was derived the name of Esion-geber, or back-bone? Within there is a spacious anchorage; and if steam navigation extends to this gulf, it will be a most valuable station.

The epithet "Golden" does not, however, as Pococke was informed, take its origin from a tradition that gold was formerly brought there; but rather, it would appear, from the circumstance of the sand in its vicinity containing yellow, shining, micaceous particles, exactly resembling that precious metal. It is also worthy of remark, that the teeth of two Ibices we received on board were covered with a substance resembling gold; and the same peculiarity has been observed in other parts of the world. On Mount Lebanon, the natives observe a like appearance in their sheep, through feeding on a certain herb, which, could they discover, they believe would serve as a guide to mines of that mineral. To the westward of a long projecting point, which bears evidence of having been formerly

covered by extensive date-groves, there are some mounds, having the appearance of covering ruins. I consider the absence of any remains at Daháb of little importance as affecting its supposed identity; for if they had escaped being buried in the sand, which the strong breezes here keeps in constant agitation, there is no reason to suppose the adjacent cities would have been constructed with materials sufficiently massive or durable to withstand the ravages of so many centuries. It is more than probable there were but a few warehouses, as, at a later period of the Indian trade, when the arrivals were more frequent than Solomon's solitary fleet of three years, neither Berenice, Myos Hormus, nor Arsinoë, judging from their remains, ever attained any extent or opulence.

But the decision of a question, interesting to few excepting the learned, is almost lost sight of, in the other advantages geography has received from our examination of this Gulf. The bifurcation at the extremity, which so long figured on our maps, is now shown to have no existence. The true posi-

tion of 'Akabah, long a desideratum in science, has been determined, by which we are enabled to fix with correctness the sites of various towns and stations, ancient and modern, dependent on that point*. To our knowledge of these facts, we may also add the delineation of two hundred miles of a sea-coast before almost unknown, but ever to be regarded with sentiments of the liveliest interest and veneration, as forming no inconsiderable portion of that land of prophecy and miracle, the scene of the principal events recorded in holy writ.

It was at one time feared that Government would have withheld their sanction from an examination of this sea, but the same liberality which has ever marked the proceedings of the Indian government in similar,

* Major Rennel, in his posthumous work lately published, expresses mortification that, from causes not understood, the position of 'Akabah could not be satisfactorily adjusted; the authorities differing very widely in respect to one another. Pietro della Valle visited this gulf in 1615, and saw amongst other extraordinary things, a man and woman upwards of eight feet in height; and tortoises as large as the body of a carriage. Burckhardt passed along the eastern shore, but could not reach 'Akabah. Rüppel was more successful.

operations, at length predominated, and it will remain, with their other surveys, a lasting proof that the taunt of indifference to the acquisition of knowledge not available for their own immediate purposes is not applicable in this, if in any instance.

We now repassed the straits, and returned to Kosaïr, having been five weeks engaged in this our second examination of the Sea of 'Akabah. As the Palinurus was the first, so probably she may be the last vessel destined to sail along its wild and rocky shores.

If, from causes that may readily occur, the present communication between India and Europe through Egypt should become intercepted, packets and even passengers might be conveyed by way of the Gulf of 'Akabah through Arabia Petræa to the ports of the Mediterranean. From 'Akabah to El Arish, the ancient port of Rhinocolura, to which, as the nearest point, the commodities of India were formerly conveyed from Elath and deposited, the road lies N. 31° W., and the direct distance is one hundred and sixteen miles. From 'Akabah to Gaza, which is described as having a tolerable harbour, the road lies N.

9° W.; and the direct distance is one hundred and twenty-five miles. The Bedowins estimate the journey from 'Akabah by both these routes at three days. There would, I imagine, be no difficulty in securing, by means of a few presents, the good will and assistance of the various Bedowin chiefs; and if, on examination, the weather should be found too boisterous (but this with steamers I do not contemplate), the packets might be landed near the entrance of the straits, and conveyed along its shores.

Plague or pestilence may intercept, at no very distant period, the communication by the way of Egypt, and this oldest and now nearly-forgotten route would then again become available.

Had circumstances permitted Burckhardt to traverse the sea-coast of Arabia, between Jiddah and the entrance of the Gulf, the accuracy and extent of his information would, without doubt, have left little to be gleaned by any subsequent visitor; but it will be remembered that his researches on this coast were confined to the cities of Jiddah and Yembo, and that the remaining portion was

but cursorily examined by him. On this account, I am induced to hope that my remarks may possess a value to which they would otherwise have no claim.

We commenced our operations at Rás Mohammed, on February 28th, 1831. This cape has already been described in my account of Sherm, and from thence we proceeded to Tehran, which is situated midway between the two shores which form the entrance to the sea of 'Akåbah. In shape, it resembles a right-angled triangle, the western side forming the perpendicular, and the southern the base. Towards the northern extreme, on its eastern side, lies an excellent harbour, well sheltered from all winds; but the difficulty of access will probably hinder its being made available for any useful purpose. The surface of this island exhibits a succession of parallel ridges, extending from north to south, and gradually ascending to a high peak, from the summit of which we obtained an extensive view of the surrounding country. The soil is calcareous; its surface is strewn with fragments of mica, intermixed with shells and other marine substances, and

large masses of coral are imbedded in the lower portion.

It is destitute of water, and with the exception of a few fishermen, may be described as uninhabited. In antiquity, this island was sacred to Isis, and, with others of the same group, after being lost for some centuries, was restored to geographers by Mr. Irwin, who has, nevertheless, fixed them very inaccurately. A party from the ship, sleeping on shore, had their slumbers disturbed by hyænas, although none were seen on the Arabian side. Here they probably subsist on fish thrown up on the beach, or entangled in the rocks, and drinking the rain water left in the hollows. Naphtha, with which the Arab mariners "pay" their boats, is procured in considerable quantities from this island.

Zenáfer, the adjoining island, is of moderate elevation, (about one hundred and fifty feet) and of a circular form; it has otherwise nothing remarkable in its appearance. On the western side it recedes into a deep bay, affording excellent anchorage, and much frequented by native vessels, proceeding between the Arabian coast and Rás Mohammed.

Snakes, which the Arabs describe as venomous, are very numerous both here and on Tirán. They measure about thirty inches, are of a slender form, with black and white spots. Many of the flowers and plants common to the main grow on these islands; which are, however, destitute of trees. The base of Senáfer is coral, and the hills of sandstone, with an upper stratum of shells and broken coral; abundance of sea eggs (*echini*) were procured on the reefs around this island. Their spines were of uncommon length.

In consequence of the coast from Rás Fartak to the harbour of 'Aïnúnah being fronted with numerous coral islets, with narrow and intricate passages between them, barely navigable for boats, we did not approach it in the ship. In some places near the sea, it was low and sandy, in others swampy, and covered with bushes. From one of the islets, Reïmán, we obtained a plentiful supply of firewood. Opposite, on the main, there is a village, inhabited by some fishermen of the Huteïmí tribe, who by paying a tribute to the Howeïtát Bedowins, are

permitted to cultivate a few date-trees in its vicinity. To the southward there are several extensive date-groves belonging to the latter; and from hence to Mowílahh, their encampments occur frequently, with numerous flocks and abundant pasturage, especially near 'Aïnúnah. Sheep, firewood, milk, butter, &c., may be obtained from this and most of the other villages on the coast; but bagalás, in their passage to Rás Mohammed, driven by stress of weather, rarely proceed so far to the northward.

The harbour of 'Aïnúnah, in lat. 28° 2′ 30″ N., long. 35° 18′ E., is well sheltered from all winds; yet I am apprehensive that the dangers near the entrance, exhibited in the chart, will deter mariners from it. With a good pilot, a vessel might enter with every facility and safety. Towards the interior, at the distance of a mile and a half from the beach, between two barren and rocky hills, is the valley of 'Aïnúnah, celebrated among the Bedowins for pure and abundant water. The appearance of this luxuriant, though uncultivated tract, contrasts strangely with the wild sterility of the neighbouring scenery.

The Arabs point out some ruins on both sides of the valley, which they say are of Nassari, or Christian origin. They were in too dilapidated a state to enable us to ascertain what claim they have to such an appellation; but that they are not Arabian, appears evident, since the former occupants constructed an aqueduct leading from the valley to the beach, at the cost of more trouble and labour than in all probability the Bedowins, under any circumstances, would have bestowed on such an undertaking. It is a mile and a half in length, and about two feet in width, varying in height with the inequalities of the ground, the lower portion being constructed of stones cemented together, and the upper part or channel, of burnt tiles. By this the water was conducted from the valley to a reservoir near the beach, of which there are still some remains.

The nature of the soil in the valley, and the facilities which the numerous streams present for irrigating it, are, with the usual apathy and indifference to agricultural pursuits common to the Bedowins, almost entirely overlooked. Thus, a spot which industry in one or two seasons would render remarkable

for gardens and cultivation, is now overrun with long sedgy grass, and merely nourishes a few dúm* and date-trees.

I perceive that Dr. Vincent, in his Dissertation on the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, has placed the town of Leuké Kômé† near this part of the coast. But he appears to have drawn his conclusion from the scanty notices handed down to us by ancient geographers, and the observations made by Mr. Irwin in his voyage along the coast in 1777. In selecting Mowílahh as the site of this town, Dr. Vincent, I think, has been misled by Mr. Irwin's map, in which the islands of Tirán, Barákán, and Senáfer are placed immediately before Mowílahh, so as to afford a degree of shelter to that station, by which it is made to coincide with the description of the ancient port, as given by Agatharchides. The position

* The bifurcate palm: Palma, or Cucifera Thebaïca.

† 'Leuké Kômé, or "the White Village," was the point of communication between Petra, the capital of the country, and the residence of Malichi, the King of the Nabateans. In itself, it had the character of a mart, in respect to the vessels that obtained their cargoes in Arabia, for which reason, there was a garrison placed in it under the command of a Centurion; both for the purpose of protection, and to collect a duty of twenty-five per cent. upon exports and imports.'—Vincent's *Periplus*.

which Irwin has assigned to those islands with respect to the coast-line is most erroneous. Their true situation, now clearly ascertained, proves that they could afford little shelter to Mowílahh; nor has that station, as will be hereafter pointed out, any harbour or protection from the tempestuous northerly winds that prevail here with intermissions throughout the year.

The channel adopted by the ancients for conveying the merchandise of India, Africa, and the southern parts of Arabia, to Jerusalem, was by the ports of Elath and Esiongeber, situated near the head of the Elanitic Gulf. But, as the navigation of this arm of the sea, which, even at the present day, is considered perilous, must then have presented insurmountable difficulties, it is known that a port was fixed upon near the entrance, but outside the gulf, where vessels coming from the south discharged their cargoes, and from which depôt they transported their merchandise by land to Elath and Esiongeber. Thus the tedious passage up the gulf was avoided. It may be observed that the same motive for shortening a long and dangerous

voyage has at different periods operated in causing the transfer of the trade from the port of Arsinoë, near the modern Sŭez, successively, to Myos-Hormus, Berenicé, Adūlis, and lastly to 'Aden, without the Straits of Báb-el-mandeb. A glance at the chart will show that it would have been impossible to select a port whose situation could have been better calculated for such a purpose than 'Aïnúnah. The coincidence between the nature of the coast here, with the situation of the islands of Tirán, Senáfer, and Barákán, and their position and appearance as described in the extracts from Agatharchides, quoted in Dr. Vincent's work, is very striking.

The appellation of "white," which was bestowed on this and several other towns on the coast, might still, from their being constructed of the same material as formerly, be continued to those at present in existence: the glare produced by the sun shining on the coral renders their whiteness distinguishable from a great distance.

The country bordering on the sea-coast in the vicinity of 'Aïnúnah, and extending thence to Mowílahh, affords better pasturage than

any part of the coast which I have seen. In this tract the Bedowins' huts are numerous, as well as large flocks of sheep and goats. Their residence here is however merely temporary, for, should the rains fail them—an event occurring about once in four years—they retreat from the low country to their mountains. In this elevated range—and many of the hills are six thousand feet in height—they possess abundance of water and a never-failing supply of herbage. Several of the valleys, also, have extensive date-groves and fields of dhurrah*, cultivated by slaves.

The Howeïtát Bedowins occupy the coast from Magnah to Jebel 'Antar, comprising the mountainous tract which rises about ten miles from the beach, extending as far as the Syrian Hájj station of 'Akabah. Formerly they were frequently engaged in expeditions against distant tribes in Nejd, from whom, protected by the unapproachable nature of their fastnesses, they entertained no fear of retaliation, and, as bold and expert warriors, they were, before Mohammed 'Alí obtained so great an ascendancy in Hejáz, much feared

* Sorghum vulgare.

by the caravans; but their dread of the Pasha's power, and an annual present of grain and money to their Ṡheïkh, render them now much more tractable.

CHAPTER X.

Ford of the Bedowins—Huteïmí—Dress—Sheïkh Aláyán—Route to Gaza, &c.—Unsuspicious Character and Hospitality of the Bedowins—Mowílahh — Caravans — Dangerous Anchorage—Description of the Coast—Shushuáh—Bara'kán—Ye'úbáh—Sherms Yahar and Dhoba—Na'mán—Mersa Eylam—Sherm Jezzah—Desolate Coast—Sherm Wej-h—Visit from Sheïkh Amir—Ruined Town—Hasani—Hatred between Arabs and Turks—Anecdote—Sherm Abban—Tradition of Merdunah—Anecdote of an African Boy—Bedouin dislike to Cultivation.

THE Bedowins on this part of the coast mostly subsist on what is procured by the sale of their flocks and their butter. The former is taken to Nejd, and there exchanged for grain, principally dhurrah; the latter is either disposed of to the Hajj boats on the coast, to the caravan in its passage through their territories, or is carried to Yembo' or Jiddah, where a ready sale awaits it. Their food, while residing on the coast, consists mostly of milk and dates, occasionally, though rarely, varied with grain or animal food. The latter, however, is never

eaten, unless on some occasion of festivity. They possess no boats of their own; and the Huteïmí, in addition to a tribute which they pay of two dollars a-head per annum. for protection, supply their masters with fish, large quantities of which are also salted and conveyed into the interior for sale.

The dress of the Sheïkh and the better sort consists of the 'abà or cloak, procured from either Syria or Egypt, striped vertically black and white, and a loose shirt of unbleached cloth, extending as low as the knees, and bound round the waist with a leathern girdle, in which is thrust a long crooked knife, or jambír, their ammunition, and the apparatus for striking a light, which a Bedowin is never without. The poorer sort wear the same description of shirt, with a cloak of darker colour and coarser texture. The Sheïkh, and a few of his followers only, wore the striped red and yellow kerchief, in such general use in other parts of Arabia; and all the tribe therefore permit their hair to grow, which is generally plaited, and reaches as low as their waist. Whilst subjected to the sway of the Wahhábís, the Bedowins were compelled to

wear their hair close, in conformity to a custom established by their conquerors; but, when the power of the latter became broken, the Ḥoweïtát returned to their ancient custom.

Shortly after our arrival we received a visit from the superior Sheïkh of this tribe, whose name was 'Aláyán. He appeared about fifty years of age, of a spare but vigorous make, and his manners were mild and placid. He spoke, as do all the Bedowin chiefs in his pay, whom we have met with, in high terms of Mohammed 'Alí; yet it is not difficult to perceive that they and their followers would hail with satisfaction the removal of the restrictions to their former habits and pursuits, which the Pasha's success in Hejáz gave him the power to impose, and which his address and talent have enabled him to continue.

From the Sheïkh we learned that camels might be procured here to proceed on to Gaza in four days, to Jerusalem in six, and to Deráyah in nine. By the former of these routes packets from India might be conveyed with great facility to the shores of the Mediterranean. After securing the interest of this chief by means of a few presents, we were

permitted to roam over the country without interruption. The Bedowins, none of whom ever before had seen Europeans or a ship, testified few symptoms of curiosity or surprise when admitted on board. On the second night after our arrival 'Aláyán with about a dozen of his followers remained there all night. Prior to retiring to rest, without its being solicited or hinted at, they gave up their arms to be taken care of until the morning. Such a measure with their own tribes, among whom it is well known the laws of hospitality are preserved inviolate, would have drawn no attention, but with us, who were strangers, and whose visits, observations, and proceedings on their coast were at the least calculated to excite suspicion, it was a mark of confidence as unexpected as it was pleasing. On shore the behaviour of these Bedowins was very friendly, and they never permitted us to pass their huts without an invitation to partake of what they afforded; for this they neither asked nor accepted any remuneration. In their dwellings, which are very small, and constructed of a few upright sticks about six feet long, surrounded by

cloths made of sheep and goats' hair, and covered with the same material, they had neither furniture nor bedding, except the clothes they wore; and their only utensils were a few cooking-pots, a bowl for holding milk, and some jars containing either butter or g'hí. Unlike the generality of their countrymen near the coast, they did not appear jealous of their women, or solicitous to conceal them from our view. We conversed freely on these occasions, while their faces were uncovered; but, whenever we met them abroad, the mouth and lower part of the face were invisible.

About seven miles and a half to the southward of 'Aïnúnah there is a low, sandy, and somewhat bushy island, which has a few huts on its northern end belonging to the Huteïmí tribe. The ship anchored off its southern extremity, in a channel between it and the main, the latter distant about half a mile. The coast here forms a low table-land, intersected by numerous valleys leading from the interior towards the sea. At the period of our visit the bottom and sides of these valleys were covered with trees and long

coarse grass, with numerous wild flowers and plants. The trees are principally Acacias.

Mowílahh is merely remarkable for its castle, which, with several others, was built on the route of the Egyptian caravan, to serve as a granary and halting-place. Except in size, they differ but little from each other, being constructed of hewn coral, cemented with mortar. Their shape is quadrangular, flanked with round towers, in which are placed some old broken, and in many cases dismantled, guns. The upper part of the walls, measuring thirty feet in height, is pierced with loopholes for musketry, but their extent would require a large force to defend them. The troops occupy the interior along the southern and western sides, the northern and eastern being appropriated for the reception of grain, &c.

Mohammed 'Alí, upon whom has devolved the whole government of Hejáz, furnishes these stations with the necessary supply of grain; and the garrison, consisting of an officer corresponding in rank to our serjeant, and fifty men (Maghrebín* soldiers), is also

* Barbaresque Arabs.

paid by him. I observe, likewise, that all the castles on the Syrian Hajj route are garrisoned by the same class. On the arrival of the caravan, only the soldiers who accompany it are permitted to encamp within the fortification; the pilgrims and the Bedowins pitch their tents outside, near the walls, about two hundred yards on the north side of the castle. During their stay a brisk trade is carried on with the Bedowins, who assemble from the surrounding country, bartering their sheep, g'hí, &c., for powder and cloth. Scattered among the numerous date-trees that surround the castle, there are about one hundred and fifty huts constructed of cadjans, and some few stone houses rudely built, and occupied by the cultivators of the trees. A few persons also reside here for the purpose of supplying the small Hajj boats that put in with provisions and water.

Near the wells, which are lined with stone, we saw some gardens which produce grapes, the nebek*, melons, &c., with a few vegetables, barely sufficient for the consumption

* Rhamnus Nabk.

of the garrison. Sheep can be purchased here from the Arabs; also water, which is good, and fire-wood, but the latter is indifferent and its supply uncertain. Small boats occasionally visit Mowílahh for these necessaries, but the larger bagalás proceed to Sherm.

The coast in the vicinity and to the northward of Mowílahh is low, gradually ascending with a moderate elevation to the distance of six or seven miles, when it rises abruptly in hills to a great height, those near Mowílahh terminating in sharp and singularly-shaped peaks. When viewed from the northward, several of these are shut in, and form a narrow ridge. The height of the most elevated was found to be six thousand five hundred feet, and it obtained from us the appellation of "Mowílahh High Peak." From the southward these have an irregular columnar appearance, with chasms, rather than valleys, between them. They have frequently been noticed by navigators in their passage up the sea; and I observe Mr. Irwin, who sailed by this part of the coast on his way from Yembo' to Kosaïr, has styled them the Bullocks'

Horns. To me the whole group seemed to bear a great resemblance to representations which I have seen of enormous icebergs.

I shall notice but briefly the islands which lie off this part of the coast in a line between Mowílahh and Senáfer, since the sailing directions will embrace all the information relating to them that is of practical interest.

Shushú'ah, the most northerly of the group, forms at a distance like a gunner's quoin; its height gradually increasing from a low point on the northern extremity, to a bluff elevation forming its southern termination, which has a height of three hundred and fifty feet. The whole island appears formed of red and yellow (variegated) sandstone, mixed with coral; large masses of the latter, of the circular form (Madrepore), so often met with on reefs near the surface, may, when the rain has washed away the soil, be seen imbedded in the rocks; and the loose broken pieces of the branched kind, petrified shells, and other marine remains, are thickly strewed over the surface. The Palinurus anchored here in a small bight on the north-east side of the island, between two reefs, and narrowly

escaped being wrecked during a gale from the northward. I have since learned that on the same spot was lost one of those enormous vessels that formerly traded between Jiddah and Suez.

From the boisterous weather and numerous rocks in this part of the sea, the navigation is so exceedingly dangerous, that scarcely a day elapsed without some hair-breadth escape. It would have been impossible to have conducted a ship of greater burden, or one less quickly manageable, amidst the labyrinth of shoals through which we had often to thread our way.

Barákán is divided into two parts, which are connected together by a low sandy tract; so that the two quoin-like hills into which it rises at a distance appear as two separate islets. On a nearer approach, its broken and rugged appearance is very remarkable; large masses have been detached from the body of the hills, and lie scattered at their bases. The anchorage here is small and indifferent.

The island of Ye'úbáh is higher than either Barákán or Shushú'ah, but its appearance and formation are the same. Their posi-

tions were fixed in the old charts with tolerable precision, but the coast-line about Mowílahh was drawn much too far to the westward. The nature of the shore, and the fact of its being seen in clear weather, added to the dread which mariners entertained of approaching an unknown and dangerous coast, most probably gave rise to this error. On approaching the shore from seaward, it forms in narrow parallel ridges, which successively rise without any observable increase or decrease of shade; so that the land at the distance of twenty miles presents nearly the same appearance as it does at ten, and in both instances appears close to the vessel. This extraordinary clearness and purity of the atmosphere is mostly observed in December, January, and February; and during this period the outline of any object on the horizon, however distant or small, may be observed with the utmost distinctness: the brilliancy of the nights is also very great, and facilities are thus afforded to the mariner for making celestial observations, which in the navigation of this part of the gulf he will find of essential service.

Sherm Yahár may be entered without any apprehension*; it has excellent anchorage, is spacious (at least, contrasted with other inlets on this coast), and well sheltered from all winds. Wood and water, in small quantities, may be procured from the Bedowins, who bring these articles from Mowílahh and the interior on camels, for sale, to the boats that put in here on their passage up and down the coast. On the northern side of the entrance a pile of stones has been raised by the Arabs, without which it would be difficult to distinguish it.

In these days, for reasons which he who has been in Egypt, or mixed much with Arabs—which I was constantly compelled to do—will easily comprehend, I shaved my head and wore a wig. Having landed at this anchorage, I took my seat beneath a tree, and was busily engaged in sketching, with our purser, a man of much humour, and a

* From boisterous weather or other causes, it is not improbable a vessel might seek for some harbour in which to heave down or repair in this part of the sea. Sherm Yahár is exceedingly well adapted for the purpose; and the vicinity of the fort of Mowílahh would render the navigator less apprehensive of molestation from the Bedowins than in more unfrequented parts of the coast, where, however, there are harbours equally good.

great favourite with the Arabs, at my side. As usual, a number of boys crowded around. My companion, who was standing with his back towards them, turned suddenly round, snatched off my wig, and flung it amidst the group. Had my head or legs followed, they could not have been more surprised. Some stood open-mouthed and aghast with astonishment; others scampered off; and all for some time afterwards kept at a wary and respectful distance. On another occasion, journeying from Tór to Suez, and having no other bedding than my boat-cloak, I had one night taken up my quarters on the sand near my camel. It was excessively cold, and towards morning I was awakened by an extraordinary sensation about my head. I turned round, but did not rise until it was repeated. I then discovered that my wig was off, my head cold as an iceberg, and the camel amusing itself by moistening my cranium with his broad and file-like tongue.

At Sherm Dhobá the anchorage is small and inconvenient, and could only be made available for boats or small vessels. It is likewise difficult of egress, which can only be effected in the morning with a land-wind, at

which period a heavy swell is experienced at the entrance; so that, should it fall calm, a vessel would probably be set on the rocks. At the distance of half a mile from the beach, and fronting the anchorage, is an opening in the range of hills which runs parallel with the coast, affording an extensive view of the interior. Fronting this opening grow several dúm-trees*, and a few yards farther to the right are wells with an abundant supply of water, sunk by Sooltán Selím I. for the use of the pilgrims on the Hajj route, and constructed of hewn coral. The water procured from them is tolerable, but inferior to that obtained at Wej-h. A few deserted huts stand near this spot; but we saw no inhabitants, as it is only occasionally visited by the Bedowins for the convenience of obtaining wood and water. Of the birket, or reservoir, mentioned in an itinerary procured by Burckhardt, we saw no traces.

The island of Na'mán is long and narrow. A few bushes are the only signs of vegetation upon its rugged hills, which appear to be almost entirely composed of coral. It is

* Palma Hebnica.

much frequented by native vessels in consequence of the excellent harbours which are found on its eastern side. On the main, nearly opposite to this island, is an anchorage called Mersa Ezlam, about three miles from which, towards the interior, stand the ruins of a castle. The garrison was withdrawn, and it ceased to be considered as a halting-place for the caravan, in consequence of the indifferent water in its vicinity, so that the pilgrims now rest here only for a few hours, and proceed on to Dhobá. This castle marks the southern limits of the territories belonging to the Howeïtát Bedowins; the coast from thence, as far as Sheïkh Morábit, being occupied by the Bilí tribe.

In Sherm Jezzeh there is no anchorage. We saw some Bedowins here, who brought down sheep for sale; their behaviour on shore was very friendly. Several fishermen of the Huteïmí tribe had also made it their temporary residence. The country in the vicinity of this and the neighbouring sherms is remarkably barren and destitute of vegetation. A stratum of black stone on the surface of the hills and plains gives the whole a bleak and desolate

appearance. The coast is partly fronted with steep overhanging cliffs of coral and sandstone. From their base, to the distance of about forty yards, extends a level band of rocks, the outer part of which is nearly dry, and rises like a wall from an almost unfathomable depth; against this the sea, meeting with a resistance so abrupt, breaks with some violence, and produces a considerable surf, which would render landing on the intermediate coast between the sherms almost impracticable.

Sherm Wej-h is a small cove, affording excellent anchorage and shelter for a small vessel. Some soldiers from the neighbouring fort, and a few Arabs of the Huteïmí tribe, reside here in huts erected under overhanging cliffs on its northern side. They gain a tolerable subsistence from supplying the Hajj boats with fresh provisions and water. The former consist of sheep, goats, g'hí, honey, salt-fish, &c., all of which being here good and cheap, considerable quantities are disposed of. The latter, besides being plentiful, and procurable at a moderate rate at all seasons, is far better than what is elsewhere to be

met with in the Red Sea. It is brought from wells near the fort, about three miles in the interior, on asses and camels, or by women. I observe on this coast that, with the exception of the Huteïmí tribe, among whom youth forms no exception, Arab females are rarely found engaged in manual labour until they have passed the middle age. Wej-h is furnished with an abundant supply and a great variety of excellent fish.

The ranges of reefs parallel to the shore, through which it is necessary to proceed in approaching other sherms on this coast, would probably deter mariners from visiting them, unless in cases of necessity; but Wej-h is free from this disadvantage. In approaching it, the island Ríkhah, which lies off the entrance of the harbour, at a distance of seven miles, forms an excellent mark for entering.

On the day of our arrival we received a visit from the principal sheïkh of the Bilí tribe, Sheïkh Amir. His power extends inland six days' journey, and coastwise from Sheïkh Morábit to the southward as far as Hasání. The general appellation of the

various hordes who occupy this tract is Bilí, and their number is said to exceed seven thousand. The 'sheïkh, though aged, appeared still active and vigorous. He was much pleased with all he saw on board, yet, contrary to the general habits of other chiefs who visited us, asked for nothing, and appeared as much surprised as delighted when a few trifling presents were made him. He receives from Mohammed 'Alí an annual stipend in cash and grain, for which he guarantees a safe passage for the supplies to and from the fort, and, probably the safety of the fort itself.

On one of the officers expressing a wish to visit his encampment, he appeared much delighted, and promised his utmost to entertain all who felt disposed to go. Had I not been then exceedingly busy, I would have accepted his invitation. Whilst on board, he informed us of a ruined town in the interior, about four hours from the fort, and also of some inscriptions cut on the face of hills which occur on the road to it. In consequence, I proceeded thither with a party on the following morning, for the purpose of examining them.

After journeying over a low marshy plain near the sea, covered with a saline incrustation as it advances towards the interior, we entered a valley, which in many places along its sides bears proof of the violence of the winter torrents, and then reached the fort, about five miles from the anchorage. It is, as I have before noticed, though somewhat smaller, built in the same style, and garrisoned in the same way as that at Mowílahh. On the north-east side, near the wells, there are some small gardens, producing a few fruits and vegetables; and to the westward we saw a small burying-ground. I noticed here a peculiarity in the mode of interment which I have not before heard of or met with. On the body being placed in the grave, it is not filled as usual, but left covered only with a large slab.

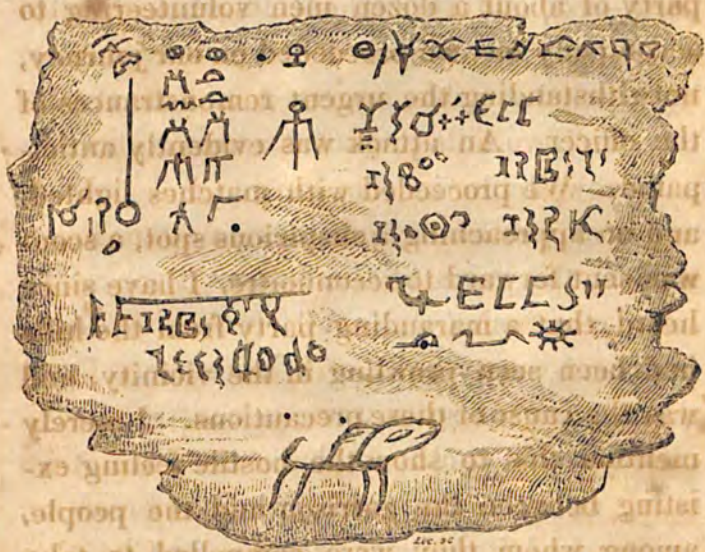
The fort is nearly surrounded with hills, those on the eastern side rising so close to its walls, that a few Arabs armed with matchlocks, and sheltered by the rocks scattered over the surface, would soon render it untenable.

I had considerable difficulty in procuring a guard, in consequence of the absence of our

friend the Sheïkh, without whose sanction the commandant declared it would be impossible to proceed into the interior, or even to the distance of a few hundred yards in that direction; but after a delay of several hours, a party of about a dozen men volunteering to accompany me, we proceeded on our journey, notwithstanding the urgent remonstrances of the officer. An attack was evidently anticipated. We proceeded with matches lighted, and on approaching a suspicious spot, a scout was sent forward to reconnoitre. I have since heard that a marauding party from the hills had been seen prowling in the vicinity, and was the cause of these precautions. I merely mention this to show the hostile feeling existing between the garrison and the people, among whom they were compelled to take up their quarters.

On quitting the fort, we continued in a south-east direction through a valley, where fresh water is obtained at the depth of one or two feet from the surface; on either side of us hills of dark granite rose to a considerable height, terminating in rugged peaks. A singular effect is produced in their appearance by thin and shining white veins, which run

either vertically or diagonally between the masses. Near the termination on its western side, at the distance of half a mile from the castle, we found the inscriptions we sought, scratched on the face of the rock.



Issuing from this valley, called by the Bedowins Wádí-l-Móyah, and still pursuing a south-easterly course, we passed over several plains interspersed with spots well clothed with herbage, to which a small yellow flower, then blossoming, gave an appearance much resembling fields of ripe corn, producing a singular effect when contrasted with the

arid, parched surface of the surrounding desert.

At the distance of about ten miles from the fort, we arrived at a rocky valley in which were the ruins. Its general direction was north-east, and throughout its whole length, which may be estimated at about two miles, lay extensive ruins, scattered at different intervals. Two hills projected across it, leaving a narrow defile in the centre, and bearing traces of two small fortresses on either brow. Amidst the ruins of the houses, I measured some remains of walls full six feet in thickness, and partly built of hewn stone. From these being of so massive a construction, I conceived it could not have been an Arab town, and the Bedowins, when referred to, pronounced it to be of Nassara, or Christian origin; but beyond this, nothing warranted my forming any opinion as to its character.

Adjoining the ruins, there is a singularly-formed hill of limestone, from the southern side of which the materials used for constructing the town appear to have been chiefly derived. The Bedowins who accompanied us pointed out the mouths of several caverns,

but no persuasion or offer of reward would induce them to enter what they believed to be the abode of spirits.

I had been informed of the existence of caves near this spot, and had therefore provided myself with ropes and lights. After penetrating to some depth in various directions, I found that the centre of the hill sunk considerably, leaving between it and the roof, which was a mere shell, extensive cavities, which served as a retreat for hyænas and jackals. We found the bones of men, camels, &c., which these indefatigable prowlers had brought from different parts of the desert. A musket fired inside sent several of them scampering out, to the great alarm of the Bedowins, who stood at the entrance waiting with great interest the result of our undertaking.

During our stay at Wej-h, boats were constantly arriving with pilgrims. At one period there were about four thousand people assembled here, mostly from Constantinople and the Barbary States. With these the officers and crew had frequent intercourse, and never experienced on any occasion the

slightest approach to insult or interruption. This fact, as relating to a race hitherto considered so intolerant, is worthy of remark. Within their cities the dread of punishment from the authorities would, it may be supposed, prevent them from pursuing an offensive line of conduct towards us; but here, to a certain extent, it might with safety be indulged in. This would show that the religious prejudices of Moslims are fast yielding to the beneficial effects produced by a more extended intercourse with civilized Europeans.

It was a part of the system adopted by Captain Moresby, and one to which the uninterrupted health of our crew was undoubtedly owing, to permit our seamen to land whenever an opportunity offered, and exercise themselves with cricket, and other athletic games. The pilgrims were beyond measure delighted at witnessing these sports, in which the Arabs of our bagála joined. Compare the circumstance of our thus amusing ourselves amidst this people, with the fearful accounts which have been furnished of them by preceding travellers, with the national

hatred which has ever existed between the Arab and the Turk, continues unabated; and the latter here adopted a curious mode of displaying it. Not a skin of water would they supply to Turkish pilgrims until our vessel was filled, notwithstanding a much higher price was offered by them: while in converse with us, either party reviled the other, as the most debased and worthless of their species. At the conclusion of the last century, good water was considered to be so scarce on the Red Sea, that vessels from India accompanying the expedition were freighted solely with it. The wells which furnish a supply at this port were renewed by Ibrahim Pacha in 1524; and its quality both here, and in many other parts of the eastern shores, is as sweet as can be desired.

Quitting Wej-h, we ran down to the adjoining Sherm 'Abbán, which is sheltered from all winds (being completely land-locked), and has good anchorage for three or four vessels. Inside, near the entrance, there are several rocky patches which may be easily distinguished by the discoloration of the water. Fresh water may be obtained here in small

quantities from the Bedowins, who bring it from a small village about three miles distant in the interior; and near the extremity of the sherm some dhourrah is cultivated. Bearing west from Sherm 'Abbán is the island of Merdúnah, remarkable for its appearance and formation. A narrow ridge of coral is detached into pointed masses, varying in height from two to three hundred feet, of which the cliffs and hollows afford shelter and breeding-places to numerous flocks of wild pigeons.

The broken and rugged appearance of Merdúnah has given rise to a singular tradition among the Arabs. They believe it to be the abode of spirits, who resort there in order to amuse themselves at night with hurling rocks at each other.

From Rás Gharkúmah to Rás Abú 'Medd the coast is fronted by a group of low sandy islets and reefs, connected together by an extensive bank of soundings, interspersed with isolated rocks. Boats frequent the intermediate channels, but no ship could venture to navigate them. One of these islands retains the name of Sheïkh Morábit, from an old

sheïkh who resided here about seventy years ago; a tomb of rude construction, erected to his memory, is visited by the Arab mariners.

On the island of Atawál is a large fishing village, unoccupied at the period of our visit. On the main directly opposite, at the distance of two miles from the beach, is the hajj station, El Haurá or Dár-el-'ashrín *, which enjoys a copious supply of water, gushing from the rocks, and abundance of herbage. In its vicinity, according to the report of the Arabs, are some remains of buildings and columns; but our stay on the coast was too limited to permit our examining the spot. Near this station the encampments of the Bilí tribe to the southward terminate, and those of the Joheïnah commence.

Hasání is well known to navigators, who generally sight it in their way from Jiddah to Kosaïr and Suez. We found its greatest elevation to be four hundred feet, sloping away to the south-eastward. Off the north side lies a small island called Libnah, between which and Hasání there is a narrow channel, navigable for boats only.

* The twentieth home or station on the pilgrim's road.

It derives a scanty and indifferent supply of water during the winter season from some wells near a sheïkh's tomb; but the quantity required by the inhabitants and the hajj boats is mostly brought from the main. During the warm season, the Arabs leave the coast for this island, to avoid the greater heat of the continent, and dispose of their grain, dates, &c., to the hajj boats, which put in here. They are all industrious fishermen, the sea in this part abounding in fish, which, when dried and salted, is exported for the Cairo market, or disposed of to the neighbouring tribes, so that they are more opulent than the other Bedowins on the coast, who rarely engage in this pursuit. During their stay they reside in a long straggling village on the south side of the island consisting of cadjan huts. It speaks much in favour of the honesty of the Arabs who navigate this coast, that we found in these houses, on our first arrival, many useful articles left without protection. On the main this tribe possesses an extensive tract of country, well irrigated by numerous fresh-water tanks, yielding them an abundant supply of dates, considered scarcely

inferior to those of Medína. A letter from Sherif Serur, at Yembo', to their Sheïkh, procured us promises of an escort to any part of the interior we might feel disposed to visit; but his departure up the coast, shortly after our arrival, prevented our putting his sincerity to the test. Though a distinct tribe, they bear the general appellation of Joheïnah: their number, amounting formerly to two thousand men, has been considerably thinned by the ravages of the cholera, which lately visited them in its passage up the coast. They fled to the islands, but the disease followed them, and numbers fell victims to it *.

On our second visit this fearful scourge was at its height, and many were daily swept off. When we anchored the surgeon left the ship in order to afford them medical assistance. I accompanied him. On landing we were conducted to the village, and had not been long seated in one of the huts before an emaciated African boy staggered in through another entrance, and, reeling towards us, fell at our feet in the sand. A group of Arabs were

* The Joheïnah is one of the most celebrated Arab tribes, though little spoken of at the present day.

seated around smoking with great tranquillity, but none advanced to support or assist him. On my reproaching them with cruelty, they replied, "that his master had died the day before, and that, as his destiny was now about to be fulfilled, no human aid could avail him." In this state, therefore, they had permitted him to crawl from hut to hut, perfectly naked, without food or attendance, under an impression that death would soon release him. It may be conceived the surprise with which they viewed the means the surgeon resorted to in order to lessen his sufferings or aid his recovery, and listened to the injunctions that were given relative to his future treatment. The surgeon continued to visit him during our stay, and on our departure he was left in a convalescent state, with provisions and everything necessary for his recovery; and the Arabs, who were still at a loss for a motive to account for the interest we had taken in him, were strongly enjoined to take care of him. In a subsequent visit we learned that he had gradually recovered, to the great astonishment of his friends. To this incident, which

speedily became known along the coast, we were probably in some measure indebted for the little molestation we met with during our stay.

If we call to mind the character of the Bedowin, his ignorance of, as well as his negligence in the observance of, the doctrines of the Koran, it will not fail to excite some surprise that he should here have retained, in its full force, one of its most irrational doctrines.

Some reports were brought us during this visit concerning a ruined town on the main, and I left the ship to ascertain the fact. The boat landed at a small indenture in the reef which here encircles the coast, near a Bedowin encampment. The beach is low and rocky, but adjoining it there are several high detached masses of light-coloured sandstone rock, which contrast in a singular manner with the dark, more distant, and still higher ranges in the interior. The encampment consisted of about one hundred and fifty temporary huts ranged in a double line in circular form, with their goats and sheep in the middle, for it was near sunset. Several dogs, resembling the English mastiff, were watch-

ing the flocks. Their huts differ in form from those of the northern tribes, being square, instead of the usual conical form. At first the Bedowins seemed to view our landing with suspicion; but I walked immediately up to the Sheïkh's hut*, which is always on the western side, and may further be distinguished by the lance planted in the ground alongside of it. Like the patriarch of old, he was seated at the door of his dwelling. "You are welcome," said he, rising as I approached, and stroking his snow-white beard: "be seated;" pointing to the Persian carpet which but partially covered the floor of the apartment. He then inquired the object of my visit, and appeared perfectly satisfied when I explained that it was merely to see and converse with him, and to inquire respecting the ruins. Coffee, milk, and dates were now introduced, and, as we got better friends, the slave was directed to bring his children. He was delighted at the notice I took of, and the few presents I gave to them; so true it is that human nature is everywhere the same. Thus, with the "wild man," as with the

* These huts are merely temporary, answering in place of tents.

polished inhabitant of civilized Europe, the nearest way to a parent's heart is to caress his children.

These huts are divided into two apartments, the men's on the left, the women's on the right. Camels' saddles, bags containing salt fish, &c., were all the furniture visible. I could learn nothing respecting the ruins; and, after remaining chatting with the Sheïkh for some time, returned to the ship.

From the abundance of water on this spot, and the appearance of the soil, there can be but little doubt that it would amply repay the inhabitants for any trouble they might bestow on its cultivation; but the aversion of the Bedowins to tillage is well known, and, with the exception of date-trees, there is scarcely anything they will take the trouble to rear. The encampments of the Joheïnah tribe do not extend beyond this, where they border on those of the Bilí.

CHAPTER XI.

Arab Sea-marks—Sherm Mahár—Cure for Rheumatism—Singular Preventative against Cold—Rás-el-'akik—Anchorages—Sherm Yembo'—Yembo'—The Town and its Inhabitants—Tatooing—Country Seats—Neckeel—Cemeteries—Fresh Water along the Shores of the Red Sea—Locusts as Food—Tomb—Yembo' Hills—Fire-wood—Bedowin Honesty—Floating Sands—Sherm Bareika—Ruins—Antiquities—Attempted Extortion—An Attack—Consequences of shedding Blood—Mirza Sabeer—Beni Soobhr—Defeat of Toussain Pacha—Sultan Ben Hasan—Mohammed 'Alí—Harb Tribe—Sherm Rabegh—Dates.

In our progress from Hasání to some shoals to the southward, I observed that the Arab mariners have a practice of turning up large portions of the reefs, which, becoming in the course of time blackened by exposure to the atmosphere, serve to point out the different anchorages. From that part of the coast opposite to Hasání to the southward, as far as Rás Mahár, the land fronting the sea is low and sandy in some places, and more elevated and rocky in others; from thence it gradually

rises to the height of from one to two hundred feet, forming at that elevation an extensive table-land. The face of this slope is intersected by numerous traces of torrents, which have divided and rent it in a most extraordinary manner. The back range, at the distance of about fifteen miles from the sea, takes the same direction as the coast, and is of irregular height, varying from one thousand five hundred to two thousand feet. It is broken into detached hills of a pyramidal form, diverging to a considerable width.

Although the interior of Sherm Mahár is not very extensive, yet the entrance is capacious, and affords a facility of egress rarely met with in other inlets along the coast. Fronting this sherm there is an extensive valley which spreads out to a considerable width as it advances into the interior. The lower part is covered with bushes, and along it, at about a mile from the beach, are some straggling dúm-trees*. In the vicinity are some wells of very indifferent water, and about two hundred yards to the right we observed the traces of a Bedowin encampment belong-

* Cucifera Thebaïca; the bifurcate or forked palm.

ing to the Joheïnah tribe. They were very friendly, and supplied us with several sheep, taking rice in exchange.

The valley presents an extraordinary appearance, not unlike the dry bed of a river; the upper part of the hills or banks on either side projecting very considerably, so that many large fragments, detached as if by the rush of a torrent, lie scattered throughout its bottom. So perfect was the resemblance, that at first sight we found it difficult to attribute these appearances to any other cause; but discovered, on a closer inspection, that the wind had blown away the soft sandstone composing the lower part of the hills, and left the upper and harder stratum without support, until, separated by their own weight, the masses fell into the valley below.

The entrance to Sherm Hoseï* is clear and capacious, and about a mile from the beach, in a north-easterly direction, are some wells of very indifferent water. In consequence of this deficiency, the Bedowins do not remain here; but, when boats are detained for two or three days by contrary winds, the Arabs,

* Hoesseï (Niebuhr).

who discern their arrival from the hills, frequently bring sheep, water, and other supplies for sale. The limbs and bodies of many Bedowins whom we saw here were extensively scarified by the application of hot irons, a native remedy in great repute for rheumatic and other local affections. In addition to these marks, one man bore on his cheek, just below the eye, the remains of a deep incision which had been made in order to counteract the effects of the bite of a snake.

While at anchorage here a Bedowin brought his son, a lad about eighteen, on board for surgical assistance. In some marauding expedition his thigh-bone had been shattered by a musket-ball, and had since been so neglected as already to betray indications of incipient mortification. In addition to this, the hectic flush of consumption tinged his cheek; so that altogether he was truly an object of the deepest commiseration. "He should lose his leg," said our surgeon to his father, after inspecting the wound; "but that cannot be: we leave to-morrow; and I should require to have him under my charge for some days." "Let not that trouble thee, O Frank!"

said the father; "our lives are in the hands of God. Cut off the limb; and He that is merciful will watch over his recovery." In this prayer the son joined; but the surgeon, for obvious reasons, would not consent.

These Arabs have a singular custom of making incisions almost to the quick in the thick skin forming the soles of their feet, which they afterwards thrust close to the fire. This operation, aided by a few cups of coffee, mingled with spices and pepper, is pronounced to be an excellent preventative against the effects of the cold. It is remarkable, at Jedda, Mecca, and some other towns on this coast, that the inhabitants should have also retained the absurd and barbarous custom of tattooing. They usually exhibit three perpendicular scars, measuring about two inches, on either cheek. This custom, called Meshâli, and performed at an early age, is variously accounted for. Some attribute it to a desire of preventing the formation of bad humours about the eyes; others say it is a proof of their birth on holy ground. On the opposite or African shore, the custom is very prevalent, and whole tribes are there

distinguished by the peculiarities of these marks.

Between the beach and the Radwah range of mountains there is a group of dark-coloured hills, elevated generally about five hundred feet. The intermediate valleys are filled with light-coloured sand, which appears to have been driven up from the adjoining Desert by strong westerly breezes. The same appearance is observable in the Sea of Suez, and on other parts of the Arabian shore. The coast continues of the same character from this point to Sherm Yembo', which is free from all dangers, either inside or at the entrance, sufficiently capacious, and may be easily distinguished. It is incomparably the best harbour on the coast, having soundings near the entrance, where a vessel, if becalmed, might anchor—an advantage possessed by few others. Sailing vessels apprehensive of entering the sherm may anchor outside, and obtain supplies from Yembo' either by land or boat-carriage. The Arabs are of the Joheïnah tribe, and may be safely trusted.

As Jiddah is considered to be the port of Mecca, so may Yembo', for the same reasons,

be entitled the port of Medína; but no parallel can be drawn between the appearance, commerce, or population of these sea-ports; for that of Yembo', from the influx and departure of pilgrims, is constantly fluctuating, as at Jiddah; but the number of actual residents, including five hundred Turkish troops, may be estimated at two thousand. Its commerce is necessarily of minor importance to that of the latter port, as no ships resort thither, the trade being carried on solely in boats. They have now about seventy, many of which are engaged in the conveyance of pilgrims and their merchandise between Jiddah and Suez.

Yembo' is situated on a low sandy spot, utterly destitute of vegetation. Its streets, which are confined and dirty, consist of about one thousand five hundred houses, and occupy an extended space. The wall encompassing the town appears to be about twelve feet high, and is pierced near the top with loopholes for musketry. At each of its angles irregular octagonal buildings have been erected, which serve to flank the sides, while those on the sea front defend the harbour.

There are numerous breaches in this portion of the wall, which, being constructed at an earlier period than the rest, is consequently in a more ruinous state. Many of these openings seem to have been made purposely to facilitate the communication with the boats, so that at high water the sea, which washes some distance above the base, is partially admitted into the town. The towers also are much dilapidated, and the town might easily be entered through the embrasures, which are not above three feet from the ground. When the two or three guns placed on each tower are not in use, the garrison keep these openings closed by wooden shutters. Yembo' has no other fortifications. Many of the houses, which are built of coral, appear in a ruinous condition, and generally exhibit symptoms of rapid decay. In their arrangement they differ from those of Jiddah and Mokhá by having, with few exceptions, all the apartments on one floor, and a ruder and coarser masonry.

Its native inhabitants are mostly Arabs of the Joheïnah tribe; the other residents being merchants, descendants of Mussulman Indians, who alone engage in trade; but neither

Banians nor Jews are permitted to reside either here or at Jiddah*. The latter abound on the lower part of the coast, as do the former at and towards the southward of Mokhá. No Arabs reside here permanently, the greater part of the year being passed amidst their date-groves at Yembo'-Nakhl†, where they have houses and gardens. Even in the town they adhere with much tenacity to the primitive simplicity of their Bedowin habits, and consequently are seldom found engaged in commercial pursuits. Few appear abroad in the street unless in their full native costume, with matchlock slung behind by a leather belt, the jambír, or crooked dagger, and one or a brace of pistols, highly inlaid and ornamented with silver, in their girdle: those who can afford it carry by their side a long crooked sabre, double-edged near the point. The 'abá—or camaline, as it is styled in the Persian Gulf—and the keïfiyet‡ are worn here by all classes. It is a broad kerchief, striped green, red, and yellow, having

* Jiddah was, till very lately, almost the only place in Hijáz, the holy land of the Moslims, accessible to unbelievers.

† That is, Yembo'-date-palm.

‡ Literally, "convenience, comfort."

the sides hanging down, with knotted strings appended to them, serving by their motion to keep off the flies, which are here excessively troublesome.

The women entirely conceal their faces with a veil of coloured transparent muslin, and envelop their persons in a loose wrapper of blue cotton, which, covering the head and shoulders, extends down to the feet. They have the reputation of being fair and handsome.

The females of Egypt are remarkable for utter profligacy of morals; they intrigue openly and indiscriminately with Mohammedan, Jew, and Gentile. Not so the Arab women in Jiddah and other towns on the Red Sea, who are comparatively virtuous; that is, their favours are not usually extended to any except those of the true faith. Deviations from this principle, nevertheless, occur. During one of my visits to that town, a Frenchman attached to the Pasha's army was surprised by the husband of his paramour: he contrived, notwithstanding, to escape from the house, and, mounted on a swift horse, succeeded in reaching Mecca, where, by pro-

claiming himself a Mohammedan, his life was safe. "And the woman?" I inquired. "She has never since been heard of," my informant significantly replied. Her exit was merciful, if she endured no greater cruelty than is implied in "lost Lelia's fate."

It does equal credit to the head and the heart of the Arabian legislator, that the destruction of female innocence is not treated lightly, as by our more civilized code, but rigorously punished by fine and imprisonment. Marriage with the Mohammedans is, however, merely a civil contract, entered upon or annulled, with much greater facility than with us. Every pilgrim who arrives at Jiddah provides himself during his stay with a legal wife, who obtains a divorce, and is at liberty to re-marry on his departure. The state of society consequent on such a practice will easily be imagined.

During our several visits to this port, the inhabitants behaved with great civility, in all probability regulating their line of conduct agreeably to the known good-will which the Pacha entertains towards Europeans. Whenever the officers of the Palinurus landed, they

were permitted to roam about the town without being made sensible, either by importunities or questions, that this liberty was granted as an indulgence, or that their steps were watched. It is amusing to contrast this fact relating to the people of Yembo', with the picture which has been given us by Irwin and Bruce of its ferocious and treacherous inhabitants. The pigs we had on board excited more attention and curiosity than the ship, though no European vessel had visited their port for many years before. I had strolled for a few miles beyond the walls of Yembo', with some other officers, and arrived at a small Bedowin encampment. Here we sat down to partake of the milk which was brought us by the females: the several portions of our uniform underwent a minute scrutiny; and while the jacket of one was pronounced decidedly indelicate, the surtout of another accorded better with Arabian ideas of propriety. Our hats they styled "jidders," or cooking-pots; but the eye-shade of the dress caps afforded the widest scope for conjecture. "What can it be for?" was echoed from all sides. "Wonderful!"

at length exclaimed an old seer, with uplifted hands, who had not before spoken; "wonderful! These Infidels are doomed to eternal perdition, and with becoming modesty, they shroud their eyes from the looks of the Almighty, nor will they lift them upwards, lest they should profanely encounter his gaze."

How forcibly, as I cast my eyes around on the assembled group, was I impressed with the unalterable picture it presented of Ishmalite manners. It was nearly sunset: under the guidance of young boys, sheep, asses, and other cattle were approaching the encampment from afar; maidens were hastening to milk them. The more aged females prepared the evening meal, consisting of huge heaps of rice, piled upon circular wooden bowls, and deluged with butter; while the young and old men at their devotions, bowed prostrate in the sand, their unsheathed swords ever ready and planted before them. The murmur of their prayers mingles with the bellowing of camels, the bleating of sheep and goats, and the deep bark of the shepherd-dog; altogether it is a busy scene, and the more interesting, that it requires little aid from the fancy to trans-

port us to the days of the Patriarchs, when the tents of Judah were spread over these plains, and Moses here tended the flocks of Jethro.

A Bedowin now approaches;—a female going forth to meet him;—he asks for water; "O, stranger!" she replies, "our encampment affords no water, but milk we freely offer to you." She then returns to the tent, and, though it may deprive her own family of their evening meal, again approaches, modestly holding up her loose drapery to conceal her bosom with the one hand, and gracefully presenting a bowl—"the lordly dish"—to the traveller with the other. He drinks; and with the characteristic and appropriate phrase, "May safety be with you!" he returns the vessel to her, and resumes his journey.

The revenue of Yembo', like that of Jiddah, arises exclusively from the customs, which are nominally fixed at ten per cent.; but great irregularities prevail in collecting them, some articles being charged at a higher and others at a lower rate. Merchandise imported from Jiddah pays no duty, if a certificate be produced from the custom-master of

that port that the dues have been paid there. At Suez, an officer is placed on board each boat bound to this port, to prevent smuggling, which, during the Sherif's time, was carried on to a great extent. Customs are levied at the same rate on dates, butter, and other provisions: many of the boats visiting this port take away large quantities of provisions for the Jiddah market.

The imports, which consist of articles required for the consumption of Medína, Nejd, and the northern parts of Hejáz, are mostly grain, coffee, and articles of dress: the latter, till within the last few years, were supplied from the India market by the way of Jiddah; but Mohammed 'Alí, from causes that will subsequently be more fully explained, obliged the Yembo' merchants to purchase the manufactures of Egypt at his own price, and does not permit the importation of any Indian commodities under the severest penalties. So rigorously is this regulation enforced, that any cloth not bearing the Pasha's stamp, worn within the walls, is seizable. The Pasha likewise holds the entire monopoly of grain, which the merchants are obliged to

purchase at his own price, and content themselves with retailing it to the Bedowins at a moderate profit.

It is only when the communication with the interior is interrupted, that Medína and Nejd are exclusively supplied with grain and coffee by the route of Yembo'. When the road is open, as at present, they convey a considerable quantity of both articles by caravan from Yemen to Medína.

At the period of our visit, Yembo' was garrisoned by five hundred Albanian troops, who were relieved at stated intervals from Medína. The situation of governor, who superintends the landing and forwarding of grain to that city, as well as the fulfilment of Mohammed Alí's very advantageous agreements with the respective Bedowin chiefs in the vicinity of Yembo', is an appointment of some importance and emolument, though his salary is said to be only five hundred dollars a month. The person who held that office during our stay was a Turk who had been a pipe-bearer to the Pasha. In his divan, no one maintained a more dignified deportment and reserve than Hassan Aga.

But Hassan Aga was fond of brandy, and in his several visits to us, after sending all his followers on shore, he gave loose to his natural disposition: off went his turban and robes, and no one then could crack his joke or quaff the forbidden liquor with better grace than Hassan Aga.

Shortly after our first arrival, Captain Moresby received a visit from a Bedowin chief of the Sheríf's tribe, named Serúr. His power is acknowledged from the confines of the Harb tribe, a few miles to the southward of Yembo', as far as Hasáni northward. They still acknowledge a superior in the Sheríf of Mecca, who still holds a moral influence over all the Bedowin sheïkhs in Hejáz, though deprived of the power and importance which was formerly attached to his high station, and now a mere tool of Mohammed 'Alí.

Serúr appeared to be about forty years of age, of a tall, commanding figure, rather inclining to obesity (an unusual circumstance in an Arab), with bold, frank, engaging manners. We were anxious to obtain his permission to visit the mountains of Radwah, about twenty-five miles distant from Yembo'. He

readily gave it, with the promise of an escort; but so many impediments arose from the jealousy of the Bedowins, who became acquainted with our intentions, and who could not be made to comprehend that our observations on the state of their country were not preparatory to taking possession of it, that we were obliged to leave Yembo' without effecting our purpose.

Bruce states that, besides possessing the finest climate in the world, "all sorts of Arabian and African fruits grow to perfection on the summit of these hills; that it is the paradise of the people of Yembo', those of any substance having country-houses there," &c. There is no doubt he received this information from the Arabs, for he does not appear to have visited them. Accounts nearly as exaggerated were furnished us, but there is great reason to doubt their correctness. If true, it would appear somewhat strange that none of these productions should reach Yembo', as, during our stay there at nearly all seasons, neither vegetables nor fruits of any description were exposed for sale, nor, from particular inquiries, could we learn they were

brought hither, even for the governor, at any season.

The feeling of jealousy which prevented our journey to these mountains also operated in frustrating an intended visit to Yembo'-Nakhl. It is there that the Arabs have their country-houses, and not on the Radwah hills, as Mr. Bruce was incorrectly informed. From what we could learn, this tract lies in a north-easterly direction from the town, at the distance of fifteen miles, and is situated at the base of a range of hills, from which a stream of water issues. Few vegetables are cultivated there, with a small quantity of dhurrah and tobacco, the attention of the Arabs being almost exclusively confined to their date-trees, the produce of which is much esteemed. Among these groves the houses are scattered, which are occupied by distinct families. The stone used in their construction is brought from the neighbouring hills; they are said to pass from father to son, being never given up by the family to which they belong.

Before Mohammed 'Alí's rule, quarrels were here as frequent as they are in the wildest

parts of the Desert, and the destruction of their date-groves was an event by no means unfrequently occurring. Since the Pasha, however, now derives a considerable revenue from the produce of their date-plantations, it has become desirable to prevent the recurrence of these disputes, and a force is constantly stationed here.

As Ptolemy places Iambia near this spot, it is much to be regretted that we could not visit it, since some interesting remains might possibly have been discovered. It is somewhat singular that the Arabs of Yembo'-Nakhl should to this day consider Yembo' as a colony, or a merely temporary residence.

Owing to a scarcity of natural springs, the inhabitants of Yembo' are obliged to collect rain-water, which is preserved in reservoirs. They adopt a simple method to effect this. Some low spot, to which watercourses naturally lead, being selected, a tank is sunk, whose sides are well lined with cement, and the top roofed over. But, should little or no rain fall during the season, as is the case about once in six years, the inhabitants obtain a supply from some wells about an hour's

journey from the town. The scarcity of good water is not so great in this part of the coast as throughout the shores of the Red Sea generally.

Locusts are sold in the markets of Yembo', and also at Jiddah. The Muḳin or Red species, being the fattest, is preserved, and, when fried and sprinkled with salt, they are considered wholesome and nutritious food. In 1831 this part of the sea-coast of Arabia was visited by an incredible number of these insects, which did much damage to the date-palms. Swarms were drowned in their passage from the Egyptian coast, and the beach was strewed with their carcases for a depth of several feet. How insects apparently so ill qualified for flight are enabled thus to cross the sea, affords matter for curious inquiry; but that they do so is evident, for we occasionally saw passing swarms in its centre.

In addition to most excellent water, which is so cheap that the Hajj boats always fill here in preference to Jiddah, abundance of poultry, and sometimes even beef, may be procured, but no vegetables.

The difficulty of egress, which can only be effected by a southerly or land-wind, is a disadvantage which the harbour of Yembo' labours under, in common with many others on the coast. That part on which the town stands is low and sandy, but in the interior there are hills of considerable elevation. The bold and lofty range over the town, called by the natives Jebel Radwah, but more generally known to navigators as the "Yembo' hills," is a collection of mountainous ridges running nearly parallel to each other, and terminating in broken rugged peaks. Their general direction lies nearly north and south, and they are nearly of the same height, while following the direction of the coast, which runs more to the eastward and westward.

From the town of Yembo', which may be seen at the distance of six or seven miles, the coast-line southward as far as Sherm Bareïkah is low, marshy, and thickly overrun with mangrove-trees*. Yembo' is principally supplied with fire-wood from this tract; the trees are felled, and permitted to remain in the sun until they are perfectly dried. It is some-

* Rhizophora (*i. e.* root-bearer) Manglé.

what singular that boats in passing do not appropriate some of this stock of wood to their own use, or convey it away for sale; but I am told that, notwithstanding no one is left in charge of it, a robbery never occurs.

Sherm Bareïkah has a narrow entrance, not more than fifty yards wide; but, as the water in the channel is perfectly smooth, and the rocks on either side rise perpendicularly, the passage is unattended with danger. From this narrow gut the interior swells out into an excellent harbour, of sufficient extent to afford anchorage in three or four fathoms for five or six ships.

With the exception of a narrow channel for boats on the northern side, the upper part of this sherm is choked up by an extensive flat, dry at low water. This passage leads to a low point, on which we discovered the ruins of a town* as large as Yembo', extending about a mile in length, and half that space in breadth, with a square fort in the vicinity, the remains of which have towers at the corners and gates. Near the middle, on either side, the walls are lofty and six feet

* Most probably the El Jár of Niebuhr.

in thickness; so that, in a country where the use of artillery is almost unknown, it must have been a place of great strength. The ruins of a jetty of solid masonry are visible near the landing-place, near which there is a quay paved with large hewn stones. We partially excavated one of the ruined houses, but found nothing except shapeless fragments of corroded copper and brass, and pieces of broken coloured glass and earthenware, of the same description as are found scattered over the ruins of Egyptian towns. An examination of these might possibly lead to a discovery of the period at which this town was erected: the glass I observed to be more opaque than that of modern times. About a mile from the fort stand the ruins of another town, constructed of coral, now much blackened by exposure to the atmosphere; and on the other side of the sherm, opposite to the low point, there are similar remains, of which the jealousy of the Bedowins prevented our making any particular examination.

Supplies may be obtained here, but great caution should be exercised in treating with the Bedowins from whom they are procured.

They belong to the Harb tribe, who bear the character of being subtle and ferocious. During our stay, after purchasing several sheep from them, they made a ridiculous demand for money as a port-due for entering their harbour, which was of course refused. On this they seized the pilot, who was on shore; and one of the party, eager to commence a fray, attempted to shoot a man of the boat's crew. A message had been brought off previous to this by one of the pilot's sons, intimating that we had no right to make observations and erect flags on their coast, and they would immediately drive us off it, but that our great guns gave us an advantage over them. "If," they added, "we would dispense with these, and come on shore, they should be happy to meet us on equal terms." Though we were not displeased at their characteristic challenge, it was deemed necessary to watch their motions, and this act of violence did not pass unobserved. A gun was immediately got in readiness, and a shot or two were fired over them, which sent the whole party scampering off. It was amusing to observe other groups who, seeing us visit

the ruins in the morning for the purpose, as they supposed, of obtaining treasure, had been patiently awaiting our second approach, to detain, or perhaps slay us. Like Roderick Dhu's men, they sprung up in all directions from the hillocks and bushes, where they were concealed, and joined in the flight.

Though unavoidably thrust on us, the occurrence of this transaction is to be regretted, and as the only occasion on which they have held communication with Europeans, it will not easily be forgotten; it is not indeed improbable they will retaliate on the first European who may fall into their hands. The inhabitants of this coast have been pronounced the most barbarous in the world; but surely without sufficient reason, for this was almost the only time we experienced interruption. Travellers should, however, be cautious in landing amidst them; but whenever they are met with, they should advance boldly, and always wear arms, as it is considered effeminate to be without them.

It is by no means pleasant at any time to be in the vicinity of coral reefs, but when there is no wind, it is particularly dangerous.

The smooth and glassy surface of the water then prevents any distant view of the rocks lurking beneath: on this part of the coast we remained utterly unconscious of our proximity to such destructive neighbours, until it became evident that the current was sweeping us slowly over an extensive bed of rock. Through the bright blue and pellucid water, we could then discern the minutest objects at an immense depth, and the secrets of the deep thus laid open to us afforded the most magnificent spectacle which can be conceived. Although there were neither

> "Wedges of gold, vast anchors, heaps of pearls,
> *Nor other* treasures of the vasty deep,"

yet the productions of nature, valueless but far more beautiful, were before us; every formation of the coral was exposed to view: on the one hand, we had a huge and shapeless pile, formed by thin horizontal layers; on the other a ponderous, and widely-spread mass, like a huge blossoming plant, supported by a thin cylinder, or stem. Successive circular fragments reared themselves aloft, or assumed the fantastic, tortuous forms of gnarled and knotted forest-trees: how varied,

how beautiful was their colouring! sometimes appearing of a brilliant red, blue, or purple; sometimes gorgeously diversified with orange, crimson, or the deepest black.

By a well-known delusion, as we glided along, these vast ocean caverns seemed to pass away from beneath us. Now they were partially illumined by the beams of the sun glancing thereon from the undulations of the waves, and at the next moment sinking into their former gloom! Can we be surprised that the superstitious fancy of the Arab should people them with evil spirits, whom they believe reside there, and lure to destruction the helpless mariner and his bark?

However much the Naturalist might have been gratified with such a spectacle, or with such reflections, I must confess that Captain Moresby viewed their beauties with a less enraptured eye. His only feelings of pleasure connected with them were derived from placing himself at a most respectful distance; this a light air, and the aid of all our boats, at length enabled us to effect.

Jebel Sub-h is a mountain remarkable for its magnitude and elevation, which is greater

than any other between Yembo' and Jiddah. Its summit is the stronghold of a fierce and warlike race of Bedowins (a branch of the great Harb tribe), called Benî Sub-h, who inhabit its fastnesses, and divided into smaller tribes, rove about in its vicinity. Several of them were pointed out to us at Sherm Bareïkah. The numerous passes by which these mountains are approached have been successfully defended against the Wahhábís during their late irruption. When the whole of Hejáz submitted to their arms, the Benî Sub-h alone boldly asserted and maintained their independence. Their territory afforded shelter to such of the neighbouring tribes as, with their families and property, were willing to seek their protection. The national independence of Arabs has been much talked of, but I question if this be not one of the few tribes that has never known a master. At two passes in the route of the caravan, called Safrá and Jedídeh, they were less successful. After a long resistance they surrendered to Sa'úd. It may be remembered that it was against the latter of these passes, when in the possession of the Wahhábís, that

Tusún Páshá received a most signal defeat in 1811. The Arabs permitted his troops to occupy the pass, and then destroyed them with musketry and rocks hurled down from above.

For the free passage of the Egyptian caravan Mohammed 'Alí treated at the conclusion of the war; and though he still furnishes the Harb tribe with an annual present, a large sum is nevertheless exacted from the Syrian hajj on this spot, before they are permitted to pass the defile.

Their principal Sheïkh, Sooltan ibn Hasan, has, for greater security, fixed his residence near this spot. Possessed of vast personal strength and undaunted courage, the fame of this chief as a warrior furnishes a general theme of discourse and admiration among the neighbouring tribes. Such qualities, joined to an intriguing disposition and considerable political talent, render him the most powerful chief in Hejáz. Several ineffectual attempts have been made to inveigle him within the grasp of the Páshá, but Ibn Hasan continues to elude his artifices and despise his threats. The dominions of the Harb tribe extend from

hence to Jiddah, the Zobeïdeh and Tuwál being merely branches of the same race. Their force is calculated at fifty thousand matchlocks, which marks them as one of the most powerful tribes in Arabia. Their habits are predatory and warlike, and their disposition bold and sagacious. In appearance they are taller and more fleshy than their neighbours of the plains, but in the form and expression of face no difference is discernible. Alike the objects of dread and suspicion to the pilgrims, to the mariners who visit the coast, and to the neighbouring tribes, they appear to be equally shunned and feared by all. But amidst the mountains, which furnish an abundant supply of fresh water, they are rich in their own resources, possessing numerous flocks of sheep, fertile pastures, a considerable quantity of corn, which they compel their slaves to cultivate, and extensive date-groves. These mountains produce the far-famed balsam of Mecca, which even at Yembo' is with difficulty obtained free from adulteration. The measures which the Páshá has successfully adopted as a means of quieting the other tribes, by stopping the

supply of grain, would therefore lose their effects on the Beni Sub-h.

Within their territories, we met them more frequently near the sea-coast than any of the other tribes. Camels, huts, and men were observed whenever we approached the shore, and on one occasion, near Rás Mastúrah, an officer was compelled to quit a station which he occupied near a few huts, by their sounding the alarm, and gathering in great numbers on an adjoining hill, with the evident intention of attacking him. It would therefore be highly imprudent to encounter them by landing at any of the intermediate ports between Yembo' and Rábegh.

Sherm Rábegh is well known as a halting-place on the route of the caravans between Yembo' and Jiddah, and also as the boundary of what is strictly considered holy ground; in acknowledgment of which, pilgrims on their arrival from the northward shave their heads and adopt the ihrám. The quantity of dates procured from the groves at Rábegh being more than sufficient for the consumption of the cultivators, the surplus is appropriated to the purchase of various articles of utility and

ornament. During the season, which is from the commencement of July to the latter end of September, they hold an annual fair, to which the inhabitants of the neighbouring parts resort in great numbers, exchanging for this surplus, salt-fish cured on the coast, and grain, cloth, &c., procured from Jiddah. These articles are retailed again to the Arabs of the interior, so that the whole of the Harb tribes are supplied from this port with the very few foreign articles which they require. Many others, attracted also by the cheapness of food, reside here, during these months, on the profits obtained from their fishing and the pearls they may have collected, returning at the close of the season to their former occupation. It was computed they amounted to about five thousand men at the period of our first visit. On our second arrival, in September, there were not more than a fifth of that number.

CHAPTER XII.

Harámil Island—Sherm Ub-hur—Pearl-fishers—Arab Divers—Old Serúr and his Sons—Killing Sharks—Anecdotes—Shark's tenacity of Life—Sea Lawyers—Mountain Range—Tehámah—Reefs—Absence of Surf—Power of the Wind—Objections against an inner Passage—Climate—Diseases—Atmosphere—General Appearance of the Inhabitants—Habitations—Arms—Account of the Huteïmi Tribe.

HARÁMIL* Island, about two hundred yards in length, is merely an accumulation of drift-sand on the upper ridge of a reef. It rises about ten or twelve feet, is covered with high bushes, and may be discerned about eight miles off. On the main, nearly opposite to the island, there is a Bedowin village called Tuwál, containing about two hundred inhabitants, who subsist by fishing and collecting of pearls. Of these, the northern part of the Red Sea furnishes but a scanty supply, infe-

* The plural of Harmalah, the Peganum of Linnæus. Haram in Niebuhr's map; omitted in his text.

rior, both in size and quality, to those obtained from the extensive banks in the Persian Gulf. Probably the most convincing proof which can be given of the insignificance of this trade is, that it has escaped the notice, or is deemed unworthy the attention, of the Pasha's officers. A few boats are occasionally despatched by the Jiddah merchants to search for pearls, but the precarious and ill-paid task of collecting them is left mostly to the Tuwál and Huteïmí tribes. The former have about forty boats engaged in the trade, which are mostly employed on the Abyssinian coast. Their mode of collecting pearls differs entirely from that adopted in the Persian Gulf, where they are found in nine or ten fathoms water. The fishermen wait for a calm day, when they pull along the outer edge of a single reef, until they discover the oysters from the boat in three and four fathoms.

From Harámil Island to Sherm Ub-hur, or Charles Inlet, the coast continues low and sandy, intersected by numerous inlets and creeks affording excellent anchorages, but rendered so difficult of approach, from the

numerous sunken rocks, reefs, and sandbanks lying off the shore, that it is not probable they can be made available for any useful purpose. The high land at the back presents nothing remarkable in its appearance.

Sherm Ubhur, or Charles Inlet, is about eight miles in length, varying in breadth from a quarter of a mile to one hundred and fifty yards. Its extremity is connected with a marsh which extends, by the report of the Arab, several miles into the interior. The river Betius of Ptolemy is marked in D'Anville's map as having its outlet in this bay. We explored its termination, but there is nothing which would induce us to suppose it receives any other supply of fresh water than an occasional torrent from the interior. The anchorage is upon the northern bank, about half a mile from the entrance, and about two hundred yards inside a rocky point, which should be rounded as near as the patch running off it will admit. With the exception of this point, the extremity of which may be easily discerned, the passage inside, as well as the coast about the entrance, is free from dangers.

The extraordinary depth to which the Arab divers descend in this sea has, I believe, escaped the observation of former travellers; yet in no other portion of the globe is this arduous occupation pursued with a similar adventurous spirit. Many exaggerated tales have been circulated respecting the pearl-fishers of the Persian Gulf; but, speaking from personal observation, I am enabled to assert that their divers rarely descend beyond eleven or twelve fathoms, and, even then, they always exhibited signs of great exhaustion. But, in the Red Sea, old Serúr, our pilot, of whom honourable mention has already been made, dived repeatedly to twenty-five fathoms without betraying the slightest symptoms of inconvenience. Some few years since a vessel sunk amidst the outer shoals off Jiddah, in nineteen fathoms, and the old man visited her for several successive days, remaining each time long enough under water to saw off the copper bolts which projected from her timbers. He also spent much time "within the bowels of the vasty deep," diving for the black coral, or yoossér, a species of neophite found near Jiddah, Yembo', and other places

in their vicinity. All his sons are equally expert as swimmers and divers. I have repeatedly seen them remain floating on the surface of the waves, watching for the descent of a rupee, which some one on board was preparing to toss over, and which they never failed to catch long before it reached the bottom. During warm weather—for here, as in the Persian Gulf, the Arabs do not admire cold water—the young divers may be frequently observed undergoing a regular course of training in their art, which they persevere in until the blood gushes from their eyes, ears, and noses. A still severer trial must be endured before they are considered adepts, which does not happen until the drum of the ear is actually ruptured. One of these amphibious youngsters, scarcely thirteen years of age, would sink to the depth of twenty-five fathoms. Old Serúr, the father, has frequently dived in thirty fathoms, and once offered, for a heavy wager, to bring mud from the bottom at thirty-five. I have been credibly informed he has actually accomplished this latter feat, though the former is the greatest depth to which I have ever seen him de-

scend; and, even there, how immense must be the pressure of the fluid by which he was surrounded!

The only assistance he makes use of consists of a stone fastened to a rope: on the former he places his foot, and the latter, when he is ready, is "payed down" as fast as possible after him. A tug on this, when his object was accomplished, formed the signal for hauling him again to the surface. Neither father nor sons appeared to stand in much dread of the sharks*, though the old man bore on his arm the scar of a large wound which he had received in a desperate conflict with one of these monsters. Amidst the reefs they are occasionally so numerous and voracious, that the large coral-fish, which we occasionally hooked at the bottom, were frequently bitten in two by them before they could be drawn to the surface. Here it not unfrequently became necessary for him to go down to clear the anchor; but he evinced no disin-

* There really appears some grounds for Serúr's assertion that, owing to the dingy colour of their skins, these monsters rarely attack a native, while the whiteness of a European usually proves an irresistible bait to their epicurean palate.

clination. Merely arming himself with a knife, which was strung by a loop to his wrist, he precipitated himself fearlessly to the bottom.

We must not, I think, attach implicit credence to all we hear respecting men killing sharks single-handed in the water, for they possess prodigious strength and quickness of vision, without which they could not dart on the coral-fish; as, when hooked, the latter flies out and plunges to the end of the line with much violence. The shark is also remarkable for its tenaciousness of life when out of its native element. On one of the banks near Jiddah the sailors hauled on board a female fish, and, as she lay on the deck, one of them struck her repeatedly with a heavy handspike on the head. She was then permitted to remain unmolested for a quarter of an hour, when some of the seamen suggested that she should be "spritsail-yarded" —an operation they accomplished by cutting through the skin of the back, and thrusting the stave of a cask through the aperture. She bore all this without exhibiting any signs of life; but, upon being again thrown into the

sea, to our great astonishment, she was observed making violent efforts to reach the bottom. Finding it impossible to effect this, owing to the stave by which she was encumbered, she continued to swim round the vessel for several hours. The antipathy which the seaman naturally entertains towards his voracious enemy may explain, but cannot be said to palliate, this cruel action. Sharks are called "sea-lawyers" by the sailors.

A range of barren and naked mountains (being a part of the great chain which nearly encompasses Arabia) extends from Jiddah to 'Akabah, approaching in some few places near the sea-coast, and running towards the interior in ridges increasing in height as they recede from the sea. In clear weather these hills are visible at a distance of from forty to seventy miles, the highest being Jebel Sub-h, Jebel Radwah, and the Mowílahh peaks, which I have particularly described. So little variety marks the appearance and form of the others, that I have scarcely deemed it necessary to enter into a detailed description. Of the character of the distant ranges we had little opportunity of judging accurately, save

that their rugged pointed outline led us to conclude they were of granitic formation; those near the fort at Wej-h (the only occasion on which we could venture so far into the interior) were observed to be of dark granite, with veins of white quartz running horizontally through them. Many of the hills nearer the shore are of limestone, exhibiting an almost entire mass of marine fossil remains, while those forming its actual boundary consist of light-coloured sandstone, fronted by and containing large quantities of shells and masses of coral. The extraordinary prevalence of the latter in the Red Sea is well known; it is found constituting reefs, probably as extensive as in any other part of the world; it also enters largely into the composition of some of the most elevated hills.

Between the bases of these and the shore there runs a lowland border of irregular width, which the Arabs call Tehámah, generally desert and barren, some few spots only being cultivated, yet bearing so trifling a proportion to the whole as to be unworthy of notice in these general remarks. The coast-line to the northward of Yembo' is of moderate elevation,

varying from fifty to a hundred feet, with no beach. To the southward it is more sandy and less elevated: the inlets and harbours of the former tract may be styled coves, in the latter they are lagoons. We observed in all those indentures that a valley (the lower part of which in some cases bore evident traces of having been the bed of a torrent, and in all exhibited signs of the former existence of fresh water) led from the interior, and opened into them. It was therefore surmised that the water brought down by the torrents had either destroyed the coral which formerly existed in these, or prevented its formation.

To the southward, from Yembo' to Jiddah, the coast, consisting of sandbanks, with coral bases, is lined with reefs, which run nearly parallel to the shore, and are in many places connected with it. The inlets, or, as they are styled by the natives, sherms, we have pointed out in the charts; but, from the nature of the coast, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish their entrance without the assistance of a pilot. To the natives they compensate in some degree for the deficiency of other anchorages; and are so situated in re-

spect to each other, as to form convenient halting-places for the boats and vessels in their progress up and down the sea. In some intervals they do not exist, and, under these circumstances, the Arabs are constrained to depend on the precarious shelter afforded by the reefs. Their importance is evident should small steamers pass by this route; and the facilities they afford of procuring fresh water, provisions, and fire-wood, may prove an inducement for ships proceeding up outside to visit them. The reefs in this part of the Red Sea are found either extending in ridges, which have generally deep water or no soundings near them, or they form extensive banks, having a depth varying from ten to fifteen fathoms.

With some few exceptions, their general direction is straight, though, in many places, the short projections on either side give them a serpentine appearance. Their length varies from a hundred and fifty yards to two or three miles, which they rarely exceed. It may be remarked that, under every variety of wind or weather, in no instance did we witness heavy surf on the reefs. If I might here

hazard a conjecture, it would be that the cause must be looked for in the coral being more porous on the outer part of the reefs; this part being composed of the branched variety, by which the force of the sea is broken, in the same manner as that of a body of water when dashed against a sieve.

But, whatever be the cause, it is of practical importance that the mariner should be made acquainted with the fact; for, in standing towards those reefs at night, he may be lulled into false confidence, and border too closely on them, under an impression that he would either hear or see the surf. In the neighbourhood of, and amidst the clusters, a chart can avail the mariner no further than in marking the outer boundary, to which our attention was therefore especially directed; within this, the navigator must be directed by the eye, as the only and the best pilot; and a short acquaintance with the manner of proceeding here laid down will enable him to distinguish the dangers, and also to estimate from the various shades the changes in the depth of the water.

In the northern part of the sea, during the

warm season, from May to October, the reefs are observed to have about two feet less water on them than in the remaining months of the year. The cause originates in the influence of northerly winds at that season, which, prevailing throughout the whole extent of the sea, makes a continued current to set through the Straits into the Gulf of 'Aden. When the southerly winds, which at the lower part of the sea prevail from October to May, commence, these currents are observed to change their direction, and to flow back with rapidity. The whole body of water, having then no means of escape, collects towards the northern part, and becomes considerably elevated. The partial influence of a southerly breeze during the former months was observed to produce for a short time a similar effect, the water subsiding to its former level on the return of the northerly breezes.

It is a question of importance to determine whether it would be practicable for a small steamer, when prevented by northerly winds from pursuing her course by the middle channel, to effect the passage up the sea by the channel between the line of reefs and the

coast. A glance at the chart will point out that, with the exception of occasional gaps, a continued line of reefs runs nearly parallel to the shore, and extends along the whole of the Arabian side of the sea. In the interval formed by the outer boundary of the reefs and the line of coast there are innumerable detached coral rocks and banks, all having between them deep channels, which are constantly traversed by native coasting vessels. Now it is well known that, within these channels, smooth water is always found; and, near the shore, land and sea breezes often prevail, when hard north-westerly or southerly winds are experienced in the middle of the sea.

These banks possess so remarkable a power of retarding the progress and lessening the power of the wind, that a breeze from seaward has frequently been observed to linger for nearly an hour at one of these ridges before passing over it; and frequently near the coast, when running along with a fine land wind on one side of a reef, we observed a fresh sea breeze prevailing from a contrary direction on the other.

The objections, therefore, that present themselves against the adoption of the inner passage are—

1st. That the vessel must anchor every night.

2nd. That the numerous rocks would render it more dangerous than a passage outside.

This track, however, would only be pursued during the prevalence of strong contrary winds, when much coal would be consumed, and little, if any, progress made in attempting the middle passage. By running along the inner channel at such intervals, she would avoid the heavy swell as well as the continued drain that invariably follows the direction of strong breezes in this sea, and would probably make a progress of fifty or sixty miles a day. With reference to the inner passage being attended with more danger than the other, I must admit that it is not easy on a first view to divest ourselves of the idea of danger, which is constantly connected with a proximity to rocks; but, on the other hand, the clearness of the water will enable the navigator easily to distinguish and avoid the rocks, especially with a steamer. Provided

she should be unfortunate enough to strike against the rocks, it by no means follows that she would be certain of receiving material injury: such accidents are of frequent occurrence with the large bagalás, some of two hundred tons, that are of very slight construction. India-built ships have in this respect a decided advantage. From Jiddah upwards, along the Arabian shore, the practicability of effecting the passage by the inner channel has been proved, for the Palinurus twice pursued that course without accident.

I will now call the reader's attention to the climate and natural productions of this portion of Arabia. Though the sea-coast of Hejáz is pronounced unhealthy, yet, afloat, we did not find it so. Among our crew, consisting of twenty-five Europeans and forty-five natives, not a fatal case occurred during our stay there. The temperature, compared with that of the Persian Gulf, is moderate: near the sea-coast, where the winds are light, with intervals of calm, it is usually much warmer than in the middle of the sea, where there is rarely any intermission of the prevailing breezes.

The north-westers are cool and refreshing, but the southerly winds prove damp, sultry, and unwholesome. During the prevalence of the latter, in September and October, the moisture of the air is very great in the warmest days, and the heavy dew at night, when all are obliged to sleep in the open air, render it particularly disagreeable. The sudden and grateful change which a return of the north-westerly breezes produces in the atmosphere renders them particularly desirable at this season.

In the upper portion of the sea, during the prevalence of northerly breezes, the atmosphere is of uncommon purity, and every object can be perceived the moment it becomes elevated above the horizon. In the course of our survey we have often used as objects, hills distant more than a hundred miles. The purple tint with which they are then warmed, communicates to their before stern and rugged features a beauty and softness, wholly foreign to their real character. In the day-time a cloudless sky throws its deep blue tinge over the sea, more bright and pellucid than the tideless Mediterranean.

But when its bosom is agitated by the tempests which so frequently sweep over it, its waves rear their snowy crests, and gleam and sparkle in the sunbeams, as they here uninterruptedly hold their wild and stormy course, or then rise high, and expend their fury on the almost countless reefs with which the shores are bounded. The nights are equally pure and clear,—the starry host illumine the heavens with a brilliancy rarely witnessed in more northern climes. I have gazed thereon, and felt the full force of the Prophet's mournful exclamation,—"Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the stars?" This was Job's country,—can we, therefore, be surprised at his frequent allusions to the "bespangled heavens?"

Though the bérí-bérí is by no means prevalent amongst the Arabs themselves, yet few ships have visited the Red Sea of late years without their crews suffering considerably from the ravages of that fatal disease. Our exemption from it may be mainly attributed to the excellent water which we were enabled to procure during our stay on the coast, as well as to the care that was taken

in supplying the crew, both native and European, at every opportunity, with the best fresh provisions. Dysentery, fevers, and ulcers on the legs, are common at Yembo' and Jiddah.

I observe that sickness to a considerable extent generally prevails during the hajj season on the sea-coast and at Mecca. The unhealthy situation of that city, the indifferent quality of its water, and the fatigues of travelling, joined to the dangerous custom of changing the garments unusually worn for the Ihrám, all contributed towards producing frequent and fatal diseases. These, however, were few and trifling compared to the prodigious mortality which has occurred this year (1831), by a visitation (I believe the first on record) of the cholera. That fatal disease had shown itself in some few cases previous to the hajj, and was supposed by the Arabs to have been brought by the Indians; but it was not until the whole multitude had assembled that it reached its utmost violence. Its virulence became at length so great, that it is computed nearly one half of the pilgrims fell victims to it.

The governors of Mecca and of Jiddah, the Pasha who accompanied the Syrian caravan, and many other people of distinction, were swept off. So numerous were its victims, that the living ceased to bury the dead singly, but dug large pits, into which the bodies were thrown by hundreds. Many pilgrims became so stupified at the suddenness of the event, that they were unable to leave the city, while others hastily quitted it, and, in consequence, the road from Mecca to Jiddah was for several weeks afterwards strewed with the dead and dying.

The disease followed the pilgrims in their passage up the coast, attacking the inhabitants of Yembo', Suez, and Cairo, successively; and we found the halting-places of the hajj boats strewed with numerous graves of those who fell its victims.

In cold weather, the sky is for the most part clear and cloudless. Generally speaking, there is no want of rain, which falls in heavy showers during the months of November, December, and January. So far, the climate of this coast differs widely from that of Egypt, where (though the distance be-

tween the two countries is only about one hundred and sixty miles, being the width of the Red Sea) it is well known rain proves of rare occurrence. A season of drought, it is calculated, occurs here about once in four years: the floods during the rainy season pour down from the hills with great violence, and almost every part of the coast bears traces of torrents formed during this season. Fogs are not uncommon at Jiddah and in its neighbourhood, but rarely prevail to the northward of that port.

The Bedowins inhabiting this part of the coast differ little in their habits or social condition from those who occupy the deserts of the interior. I observed a considerable difference between the personal appearance of the Arabs of Hejáz and those bordering on the shores of the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. The characteristics of the latter are an almost oval face, black hair, generally close shaven, eyebrows of the same colour, and a glossy skin, one shade lighter than that of the natives of India. Those near the shores of the Red Sea are lean, but of a vigorous make, and more diminutive in

stature; the form of the face more lengthened, their cheeks hollow, and their hair, with the exception of two long curls on either side (on which they bestow considerable care), is permitted to flow as low as their waist. The colour of their skin is lighter. They are generally affected with cutaneous disorders. The expression of their countenance is unpleasing, and frequently knavish.

The Bedowins of the sea-coast, as in the interior, are from necessity very abstemious in their mode of living. A few dates, some salt fish, a draught of water, with an occasional cup of coffee, constitute their usual food. If to this, on occasions of festivity, a sheep, with some rice or unleavened bread be added, they possess all the luxuries they have ever known. Honey may also be considered as forming one of the principal articles of food with all classes. The bees live in the hollows of the rocks, and feed on the numerous aromatic plants with which the northern part of Hejáz is covered: repeated references to honey are made in the Koran as a wholesome and nutritious food. It was one of the few luxuries in which Mohammed indulged. Such is the

ordinary fare of those residing in villages or towns on the sea-coast; but that of the Bedowîns, who move about with their camels, is more precarious and scanty. I am informed they will undertake a journey of ten or twelve days with nothing but a bag of small cakes, made from flour, mixed with camel's or goat's milk, and a skin of water. Two of the former, each weighing about five ounces, and a draught of water, the latter twice during the twenty-four hours, form their sole subsistence on such occasions; yet, patiently as they endure this meagre fare, whenever an opportunity offers, they do not scruple to run into the opposite extreme of voracious indulgence.

Their habitations consist of small huts or tents, the former, as at Rábegh, constructed of coarse grass and flags; the latter, as at 'Aïnúnah, and on the coast opposite to Hasání, of coarse cloths thrown over some sticks, which afford but an indifferent protection against the extremes of heat and cold; the latter, especially during the winter season, being very severe. In order to obtain shelter against the strong prevailing

breezes from the northward, their huts are generally erected behind some hillock, or amidst trees, having also the convenience of pasturage in their vicinity. Their weapons consist of a spear about eight feet in length, pointed at both ends; a jambír, or large crooked dagger of a semicircular shape, with a broad blade; a matchlock gun, having a barrel of extraordinary length; and sometimes a long sharp double-edged sword. Few, excepting their Sheïkhs, appear to possess pistols.

On the Arabian and Nubian coast we found a race of fishermen, which bear the general designation of Huteïmí, and from the similarity of their present habits, are, I have little doubt, a remnant of the Ichthyophagi, described so minutely by Diodorus Siculus.

They are found in various parts of the Hejáz, and have some large encampments near Leyt to the southward of Jiddah. Those we met with were constantly traversing the sea-shore in small parties to obtain a precarious and scanty meal of fish, which the more wretched pick up amidst the rocks or on the beach, while those who are wealthier,

and possess boats, in the indulgence of a like propensity for roving, move from place to place, subsisting principally on the same food, but occasionally varied by what they are enabled to obtain by the sale of their pearls. In this restlessness of disposition alone, the Huteïmí resemble the Bedowins of the Desert; but meagre, squalid, and pusillanimous, we look in vain amidst the former for the traits of character which distinguish the latter. A wild and fanciful tradition preserved by the Bedowins throws but little light on the subject. The prophet Mohammed, in the course of a journey along the sea-shore, having sought shelter within these encampments, was surprised at the appearance of a dog served up at their banquet. Shocked and offended, he enjoined his followers to shun them as a polluted sect, and thenceforwards neither to eat, intermarry, nor associate with them. In pursuance of this real or imaginary injunction, the Bedowins of the Desert entertain and practise towards this tribe such contempt and aversion, that they aver, when questioned on the subject, if a person were to strike a

Huteïmí, the same stigma would attach itself to the individual as if he had maltreated a female. It would be fortunate if this feeling extended to their property, but this they appropriate whenever an opportunity offers. To protect themselves from their rapacity, many branches of the Huteïmí put themselves under the protection of the several Sheïkhs on the sea-coast, which is then respected.

But little resemblance can be traced between the features of the Bedowins and the Huteïmí, the features of the latter being more sharpened, their cheeks hollow, and their eyes seated deeper in their head. The nose is long, thin, and strongly aquiline; the chin remarkably broad, and the whole expression of their countenances heavy and dull. By this breadth of the chin we were generally enabled to recognise them.

Another peculiarity is observable in their hair, which is permitted to grow to some length, and appears changed in those parts most exposed to the action of the sun and salt water from its original black to a light red colour. The poorness of the fish diet,

the cramped positions of their limbs, and the combined influence of the elements are, however, quite sufficient to produce the physical distinction between the spare, but vigorous make of the Bedowin, and their own lean, unshapely, and squalid figures.

Those who possess boats carry with them their tents, which are usually kamalines thrown over a few sticks, and pitched in some dell, or behind a cliff, for the purposes of concealment; but those who have no such property were met with almost in a state of nudity, and were dependent on the shelter afforded by the clefts and hollows of the rocks. In their tents are kept their women and children; and their possessions consist of little else than boats, fishing-tackle, and nets; a few goats or sheep, and a stone for grinding such corn as the rapacity of the Arabs may permit them occasionally to purchase. The Huteïmí females go unveiled, and I have reason to believe that their favours, either from fear or custom, are never withheld from the Arabs who are desirous of obtaining them.

On the Nubian coast, near to Meerza He-

laib, I one day strolled some distance from the ship, along the sea-shore, and came unexpectedly upon a group of the Huteïmí, consisting of an old man, a woman, and a young girl. The former was stark naked, and the latter had no more clothes than barely served the purposes of decency. At first they were greatly alarmed, and threw themselves at my feet, earnestly supplicating for their lives. On being satisfied that no harm was intended them, they were persuaded to accompany me to the ship. I never witnessed misery more strongly portrayed than in this group: their boat had left the week before for the purpose of catching turtles, and their only subsistence for the last three days had been raw shell-fish, gathered along the sea-coast. They devoured with the utmost voracity the provisions we gave them, eating the rice without any preparation of cooking. I observed that their finger-nails, from constantly digging in the sand, when in search of food, were almost totally destroyed.

The effect of their ungrateful mode of living displays itself at an early age. Many of their boys are remarkably handsome; but

at the age of twenty their faces become wrinkled, and they evince other symptoms of premature decay; indeed I believe instances of longevity on this coast are rare. In their persons and in their garments, which are rarely washed, and never changed until they fall to pieces, the Bedowins on the sea-coast display an indifference to cleanliness which is offensive and disgusting. Cutaneous disorders are very prevalent, and their progress is without doubt accelerated by the nature of their diet. Where ablutions would alleviate, if not remove these, they are wholly neglected.

Burckhardt gives an account of this tribe, more favourable than the foregoing; but his opportunities of mingling with them could not have been so frequent as my own *.

* On comparing the foregoing account with the words of Diodorus, the reader will entertain little doubt as to their identity.

" Some of these barbarians go entirely without clothes, inhabiting, among other places, the borders of the Red Sea. They dwell along the ravines on the coast, subsisting almost entirely on fish; and when the supply of that falls short, they eat shell-fish. They exhibit no traces of civilization; their women and children are common; they eat their food almost entirely raw; in short, they are little different from wild beasts." Several Arabian authors notice them. In one, the Kitab èl Mush Serif, they are styled Hootcïn, the descendants of Hooter, a servant of Moses.

CHAPTER XIII.

Arrival of Pilgrims — Number permitted to each Boat — Provisions and Water — Mode of Navigating the Arabian Coast — Begging Pilgrims — Landing at Jiddah — Burckhardt — Aggregate number of Pilgrims — Sheep and Bullocks at Jiddah — Birds — Fish — Articles of Commerce — Imports — Exports — Corn Trade — Timber — Trading Vessels — Political Events — Notes — Pilgrim Route.

It was computed that twenty thousand pilgrims arrived this year, 1831, from the Egyptian ports. Those coming from Abyssinia, Nubia, and other parts of interior Africa, embark mostly at Masawwah, Suwákin, and Kosaïr, and those from Turkey and the Barbary states at Suez. Constant employment was thus afforded from January to July to about seventy boats belonging to the latter port, and fifty to Kosaïr.

The regulations which Mohammed 'Alí has established at the different ports relative to the embarkation, passage, and disembarka-

tion of pilgrims, are salutary and judicious. The number of passengers assigned to each vessel is limited in proportion to her size, which number she is on no account permitted to exceed. Many of these boats make several voyages during the season. To prevent confusion, or the exercise of any undue preference, a register is kept of the pilgrims as they arrive, and they are subsequently embarked in the same order. The amount of passage money cannot be fixed at any precise sum, since all pay according to their supposed means; but among the middle classes it may be averaged at six dollars from Suez, and four dollars from Kosa'ir.

The pilgrims provide their own provisions and water; the former they obtain from the Bedowins at the different anchorages, sheep and goats being brought by these tribes for sale whenever boats are observed to approach the coast. Yet as they never take more than three or four days' supply of the latter, great distress is occasionally experienced when the boats are detained by contrary winds, in places where they are unable to obtain this necessary article.

Their method of navigating along the Arabian coast by the inner passage is as follows:—They sail after the sun has acquired sufficient altitude to enable them to distinguish the numerous rocks with which the channel is studded; while the land-breeze assists their boats out of the sherms, and accelerates their progress a few miles. On going down the sea, as well as in working up, they invariably anchor about three o'clock in the day, and display so little anxiety to arrive at the end of their voyage, that if a contrary wind, towards the afternoon, affords any prospect of their halt being delayed two or three hours later than usual, they run back to some point of shelter they have recently quitted, and anchor there until the following morning, however fair the wind may become. Few, excepting the largest of these boats, drop their anchors or grapnells; but when the vessel approaches sufficiently near the reefs, the sail is lowered, and two or three of the crew jump overboard with ropes, and secure her to the rocks by means of hooks. When the vessel is hauled close to the beach the pilgrims land and cook their evening meal.

In consequence of the crowded state of their vessels, whenever a manœuvre is to be executed, the confusion is very great. The black pilgrims are treated with little consideration; and quarrels constantly arise between the sailors and the Turkish and Mogrebin passengers, which the latter frequently decided with their knives. To avoid the crowd and filth of the interior, many of the pilgrims sling their beds, which resemble the chár-páis of India, outside the vessel, where, sheltered by an awning, they remain during the whole voyage.

Attached to the caravans, and at the various stations, are a number of wretched beings, for the most part in the last stage of disease, and solely dependent on the precarious charity of their fellow-travellers for the means of visiting and returning from the holy cities. To prevent their accumulation at the different ports, where they would probably engender disease, they are portioned out into separate parties by the governors, who compel the different boats and ships to furnish them with provisions, and convey them, free of expense, to the various ports whither they may be proceeding.

To evade this burden, the honest Nákhodás do not scruple to use every artifice, and the poor wretches are frequently enticed out of the vessel, and left at the first place she may touch at. If that is near any port having a competent authority, he places them on board the next vessel; but if, as more commonly happens, they are landed on some unfrequented shore, a miserable death by thirst and starvation awaits them.

As the largest vessels are not able to approach sufficiently near the town of Jiddah to land their passengers, small boats come off directly the bágalás have passed the gateway. Then it is that the scene becomes busy and interesting to the stranger. Much wrangling and quarrelling constantly occur between the pilgrims and the boatmen; for, as in every other land, these consider the new comers to be fair game, and evince a most laudable impatience to fleece them unmercifully.

Little deference seems paid the sex on these occasions. All strive to reach the shore as soon as possible, and the streets are then crowded with a more motley assemblage of human beings than it is probable were ever

collected on one spot in any other portion of the globe.

The unsettled state of Hejáz when Burckhardt visited it, in 1816, induced him to predict that the time had passed away when pilgrims, urged by feelings of devotion, would continue to flock annually to Mecca to visit the shrine of Mohammed. A doubtful war, in which the Pasha was at that time engaged with the Wahhábís, could scarcely allow him, in a country like Arabia, to anticipate the long and uninterrupted peace which has followed its successful termination; yet from this cause, the absence of all imposts on the pilgrims, and probably an increasing spirit of commerce, so many facilities and inducements are held out to visit the holy cities, that in 1831 there were more pilgrims assembled there than had been known within the last half century. In 1816, but two of the five or six regular caravans were present; but in 1831, the other three enumerated by Burckhardt, viz., the Mogrebin, the I'ráni or Persian, and the Sherkí or Yemen caravans arrived at Mecca, and it was computed that the whole multitude exceeded one hundred and twenty thousand souls.

After frequent inquiry, I received the following statement of the number that arrived by sea, which however must be considered as merely an approximation :—

From India	2,000
Malay Coast	1,800
Persian Gulf	4,000
From Suez and Kosaïr—this comprises those pilgrims who arrive from Turkey, Asia Minor, &c., and many from the interior of Africa, who sail down the Nile to Cairo . . .	20,000
From Hodeïdah, Mokhá and the Southern Arabian Ports	3,000
From the ports on the Abyssinian side, Suwákin, Dahalak, &c., principally poor negro pilgrims	2,000

The remainder of those assembled arrived by the caravans.

I have before mentioned that we obtained abundance of sheep whenever we fell in with the Bedowins on the sea-coast. These were of two kinds, one white with a black face, and similar to those brought from Abyssinia; the other dark-brown, with long matted hair resembling that of goats. Though small, the flesh of the latter was well tasted.

The Bedowins in the northern Hejáz subsist principally on what they derive from the sale of butter made from the milk of their

sheep and goats. The method is very simple; the milk being placed in goat-skins, it is shaken until the butter becomes separated.

Bullocks are numerous at Jiddah and to the southward; some are occasionally met with at Rábegh, and even at Yembo', but to the northward we saw none. They are employed in the date-groves for agricultural labour, but I do not think either Bedowins or the town Arabs partake of their flesh, which they consider heating and injurious to health.

The eagle and grey vulture, several varieties of the pigeon, swallow, quail, and red patridge, are seen in this part of the Arabian coast; wild ducks were shot at 'Aïnúnah, and flocks of flamingos sometimes cross the northern part of the sea.

We found an extraordinary variety of fish amidst the reefs, and in every part of the coast. In many of the sherms they were particularly abundant. When we could not haul the seine, a boat despatched under sail, with a line astern, seldom returned without a plentiful supply. It is unnecessary to mention more than that, in common with a certain species of fish usually found in the vicinity of coral

reefs, we procured mullet, sardines, a species of pomphlet, cavalls, seer, and king-fish, &c. The natives consider the latter to be very formidable, and they are much dreaded by the divers. Sharks of a small species, rarely attaining a greater length than six or seven feet, abound upon the coral banks; yet they are not often seen at the surface, but mostly remain near the bottom. Boats are often despatched for the sole purpose of catching them, the natives greatly esteeming their flesh, which is preserved and sold in the markets at Yembo' and Jiddah. Medicinal virtues are also ascribed to some part of the head, and oil of an indifferent quality is extracted from their liver by the very simple process of cutting it into small pieces, and exposing it in bladders to the sun until the whole of the oil has exuded. A lucrative trade is also carried on in their skins and fins, which the Indian ships take from Jiddah and Mokhá for the China market. The ancients knew that seals visited this sea, for Shadwán was called by them the Island of Seals. They are still seen to the north, by fishermen who, on several occasions, showed us their skins and tusks. Whales have been

seen near Kosaïr; and about five years ago, one was thrown ashore on the island of Senáfir.

The commodities now brought to Jiddah from India are either disposed of during the hajj to pilgrims, who again distribute them through Turkey, Syria, &c., or are consumed at Mecca, Jiddah, and other cities in Hejáz. The cargoes of ships coming from Bengal are more varied than those from other Indian ports. Some arrive direct from Calcutta, freighted solely with rice, sugar, and Dacca muslin, the staple commodities; others bring coarse and fine blue cloths, cambric, of which the ihrám is made, and indigo. Touching on the Malabar coast, the ships fill up with teak-timber, cocoa-nut oil, cocoa-nuts, black pepper, dried ginger, turmeric, &c., and sail direct to the Red Sea. During the last ten years, this branch of trade has been gradually declining, and those now engaged in it barely clear their expenses.

Ships seldom leave Bombay direct for the Red Sea, unless they are small, and intended for the coasting trade. If they obtain a sufficient number of pilgrims to defray the

greater part of the freight, they ballast with sugar; but the usual practice is to proceed to the Malabar coast, where they take in cargoes of the same articles as the Bengal ships; in addition to which, they bring annually from the port of Bombay four or five hundred tons of pig lead, which is landed at Mokhá, and afterwards disposed of to the Somálies at Barberah.

The imports from Surat consist wholly of Cashmere shawls, tissue, flowered and embroidered muslin, with other valuable cloths, amounting, on a yearly average, to the value of six lacs of dollars*. Most of these articles are carried by the pilgrims to Constantinople, and a great part is also purchased by the resident merchants, and consigned to their agents at Cairo.

From Bushire and Bussorah† the principal imports are wheat, tobacco, and Persian carpets. The latter are mostly purchased by the Bedowín Sheïkhs, in whose tents one at least is considered as indispensable. From thence are likewise brought the dates of Bahreïn and Bussorah, which are much esteemed

* Six hundred thousand. † Abú-shehr and Basrah.

in Hejáz; but the profits arising from the conveyance of pilgrims form the principal object of the vessels trading from these ports. The difficulties and restrictions to which the Persians have at former periods been subjected, are now wholly removed; and these sectarians are permitted to visit, unmolested, the birth-place and tomb of their prophet. None but the rich, however, perform the hajj, and the sum obtained from them for their passage is consequently very high, varying from forty to one hundred dollars from Bushire, and one-third less from Maskat and Bender-'Abbás. A vessel belonging to the Sheïkh of Bushire cleared, this year, forty thousand rupees by her passengers.

From the Malay Islands little other merchandise is brought than spices, which are very generally used in Hejáz. Ships from thence complete their cargoes on the Malabar coast with rice. Numerous pilgrims arrive annually in these vessels. In the transport of pilgrims, and to carry on the limited trade, both of which objects are engrossed by Mohammed' Alí Pasha, four vessels are employed; and, notwithstanding the passage-money is

fixed at a high rate, they are crowded to excess, from the impossibility of procuring a passage by any other means. Leaving Mokhá for so long a voyage, a small brig of two hundred tons had two hundred and seventy persons stowed on board, exclusive of her crew.

It is a well-authenticated fact, and one which is not generally known, that a number of young females are brought annually to Mecca from those islands for sale. They are disposed of at from one hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars each, and are much esteemed both by natives and Turks, though the latter are more generally the purchasers.

Independently of the trade carried on in square-rigged vessels, amounting, this year, to twenty-six in number (about ten thousand tons), there is also a considerable branch conducted in large bágalás, which run during the fine-weather months between India and the ports in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

The returns made for these imports to the various ports are mostly in cash, with a few pearls of indifferent quality, some chests of red beads, old copper ware, &c. All these

vessels complete their return cargoes with coffee, at Aden and Mokhá.

The coffee trade, which, next to that of grain, was formerly one of the principal branches of commerce between Jiddah and Egypt, has much declined since the importation of American and West Indian produce into the ports of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, European Turkey, and Syria. The bad effects of the Pasha's severe exactions in reference to this traffic, appear from the fact that American ships frequently leave Mokhá with coffee for the Mediterranean markets, where, notwithstanding the expenses incumbent on so long a voyage, they are enabled to supply it cheaper than the merchants who convey it thither by the way of Egypt. The trade has therefore, for some time past, been in a declining state, and in 1830 it ceased, for a period, altogether.

As the barren soil of Arabia produces but few supplies of grain, and is utterly incapable of supporting the crowd of pilgrims that flows to Mecca during the hajj season, Egypt, from an early period, has contributed to supply its wants.

Mohammed 'Alí, as a means of defraying the expenses of his war in Arabia, monopolized the whole corn-trade also, and disposed of the grain required for the consumption of Hejáz at his own price. The revenue derived from this was enormous, but it was collected (notwithstanding the disapprobation of the Porte, under whose especial protection the holy cities are considered as being placed) with too much facility, and its amount was found to be too considerable to be readily relinquished. All the grain now arriving at Jiddah and Yembo' is shipped on account of the Pasha, and no one is allowed, under any circumstances, to purchase the smallest quantity until it lands at those ports, when the surplus not required for public purposes is disposed of to merchants who afterwards retail it.

Materials for ship-building are supplied either from India, or by the way of the Nile from the Mediterranean. Boats are built at Jiddah and Suez, whither they import timber. Some few are launched at Kosaïr, and others at Hodeïdah. These boats are solely constructed for commercial purposes, and piracy

is quite unknown. The number belonging to Jiddah and Yembo' may be estimated at from two hundred and fifty to three hundred. Of these there are several descriptions: the bágalás, the dáú, the sáyer, the gánjah, &c. The two former vary in size from fifty to two hundred tons; the latter is a long narrow boat, remarkable for swift sailing. The greater number of these craft are employed in the northern part of the sea, in the transport of grain from the Egyptian ports to those of Arabia, and in the conveyance of pilgrims. A considerable trade is also carried on in them to and from Jiddah, which, from its central situation, is well adapted as a commercial depôt for the productions of the upper and lower parts of the sea. Boats from Yemen, or the southern part of the sea, are not permitted to pass Jiddah without entering to pay a heavy duty; the consequence of which is, that they prefer landing their cargoes there, a part of which, being required for the Egyptian market, is re-shipped from thence in vessels belonging to the Jiddah merchants.

Jiddah is a well-constructed town, built on

a slope gradually rising from the sea. On the land side it is surrounded by a wall, strengthened at intervals by watch-towers. There are two gates, the Bab-el-Mecca and the Bab-el-Medína, which are also fortified; together with batteries at either extremity of the town, which command the harbour.

The streets are airy, the houses lofty and well built of coral. The purest Saracenic architecture is found here, at Sana, Mokhá, and some other towns in the lower portion of the Red Sea. But, proceeding northward, we lose many of its characteristics, as it becomes blended with that of Egypt. The progress of the same style may however be traced along the whole of the southern shore and the borders of the Persian Gulf to Baghdad, where, under the splendid dominion of the caliphs, it fully realized our conceptions of Oriental lightness, elegance, and splendour. There, as in the modern towns which I have named, the round, elliptical, and pointed arch form the entrance to houses of any consideration. Consistently with this peculiar order, they have projecting windows, as may be observed at Oxford, Coventry, and other old

towns in England. Their fronts and sides are decorated with exquisitely-carved woodwork, through the interstices of which air and light are admitted, and, in taste and ornament, equal, if they do not excel, the tracery of our finest cathedrals. I observed some partially glazed with stained glass. The houses are mostly cemented and decorated with much Arabesque fretwork in bas-relief. The roofs are flat, and the parapet exhibits several strange devices. These, together with the light and airy turrets of numerous mosques, create an agreeable diversity to the otherwise monotonous appearance of so many square buildings.

Arabia is a country which admits of little change; I have no doubt, therefore, this character of architecture has existed from the earliest period, and what we term Gothic was brought into Europe, and disseminated throughout its various countries, by the earlier Arabs.

At Jiddah but little uniformity in the construction of the houses is observed, and the distribution of the rooms is the same as in other Arabian towns. The lofty air-towers

common to Persia and Egypt, which catch the breeze and distribute it through the lower apartments, are not in use here; nor do the inhabitants rear their edifices so as to take advantage of the cool and salubrious northerly winds. The entrance-hall is spacious and lofty; the floor is kept constantly moistened; and within it visitors are received, and the master and servants enjoy their midday slumbers.

Every house of any size or importance is provided with a water cistern dependent on the rains for its supply; but the wells, which furnish the greater part of the town with this necessary, are situated about a mile and a half in an easterly direction without its walls. There are no public buildings of any importance at Jiddah; the mosques are not equal in size to those of Mokhá, and the Governor's residence is a paltry building. The caravansarais are spacious: within them are large squares, with lofty arched passages, affording a cool retreat to the numerous merchants who, with their merchandise, take up their quarters there.

I have few observations to make respecting

its inhabitants. The race is so mixed that they possess but few characteristics in common with each other. A yellow complexion and meagre form render them easily distinguishable from the Bedowins, although retaining the large and sparkling eye, the aquiline nose, and expressive features of that race. Some of the lower orders, accustomed to carry burdens and perform other laborious services, are exceedingly muscular. Here, as in parts of Africa and elsewhere in Arabia, they have a silly custom of making three longitudinal incisions on either cheek of their infants, the scars of which remain through life. Various reasons were assigned for this practice: by some it is said to denote the sanctity of the place of their nativity; others believe it prevents the formation of bad humours about the eyes; but the custom is not universal, many mothers objecting to it.

The inhabitants of Jiddah have little of that gravity of deportment which usually marks the town Arab: on the contrary, the smile of mirth constantly plays about their features, and, while discoursing on the gravest subjects, any witty allusion is sufficient to

provoke their laughter. This vivacity of disposition is accompanied with much suavity and politeness, not only to each other, but towards strangers. I have frequently visited and dined with them in their houses. Whatever then might have been their true sentiments with regard to Christians, they certainly exhibited no external indications of intolerance. I believe they like the English far better than the Turks.

The scrupulous fidelity with which Burckhardt has noticed every important fact connected with their domestic manners, renders any remarks of mine upon that subject wholly superfluous. Some curious details, however, relative to their political history, which came under my personal observation during our sojourn there, I have subjoined, because they occurred subsequently to his visit in 1816.

Jiddah of late years has proved the scene of strange events. It was formerly governed by a Pasha of three tails appointed by the Porte; but these officers soon became mere tools in the hands of the Sheriffes of Mecca, who eventually usurped the entire manage-

ment of affairs, and, in defiance of the orders of the Porte that the customs should be equally shared with the Pasha, appropriated the whole to their own coffers. It was but seldom, therefore, that the Pasha took possession of his government; and, when Mecca surrendered itself to the Wahhábís, and the Sheriffe openly declared himself a proselyte to their faith, the few Turkish soldiers stationed there were compelled to return to Egypt. From this period until 1811 all Turkish authority was completely excluded from the Hejáz. It has already been noticed that the first expedition made during that year by Mohammed 'Alí proved unsuccessful; a second, however, turned out more fortunate; and Tussún, his son, in consequence of his service on that occasion, was appointed Pasha of Jiddah, but occupied the government but for a few months. His father, Mohammed 'Alí, having contrived by stratagem to possess himself of the Sheriffe's person, he transmitted him to Constantinople, and possessed himself of the entire revenue of the Porte. The Sheriffe Yahaya, appointed by the Pasha to succeed him, retained little more than the shadow of

the power enjoyed by his predecessors, being compelled to exist on a small salary totally inadequate to his condition. In 1813 he attempted to revolt, and actually fled to the Bedowins, but at length surrendered himself, and is now in Cairo. The present Sheriffe, Ibn Oou, of the Baratti tribe, was raised to this dignity in 1827. In 1831 intelligence reached Jiddah that Ibrahim Pasha, in his operations against Syria, had sustained a severe defeat before the walls of Acre, and that the situation of Mohammed 'Alí was in consequence very precarious.

The ready belief which these reports obtained in Jiddah and Mecca plainly indicated the state of public feeling. Every one we met triumphantly and with confidence predicted the final success of the Sultan.

In this posture of affairs, Turkey-bel-Mass and Zemen Aga—the one a Georgian by birth, and commanding the cavalry; the other an Albanian general of infantry—made a demand on Kourshid Bey, the Governor of Mecca, for twenty months' arrears of pay, at the same time urging the claims of their soldiers, who had served with them for a similar

period. Among the latter were between five and six hundred Albanians, the remnant of two regiments which had served in the campaigns against the Wahhábís. Kourshid Bey, unable to satisfy them without permission, referred the matter to the decision of the Pasha, by whom he was directed to temporise with the chiefs until he could send them to Cairo. The messenger was seized with this dispatch on his person.

The rebels had now gone too far to recede, and they therefore at once came to the resolution of seizing the treasure at both cities, and paying themselves. At the same time they took possession of the Pasha's ships in the harbour. Aware how much his success would depend on the good or ill feeling of the Arabs, Turkey-bel-Mass immediately issued the most peremptory instructions to his followers to commit no outrages against them; and Jiddah and Mecca presented the singular spectacle of two cities rich in commercial wealth and offering every facility for plunder to a needy soldiery, yet existing for several weeks in perfect tranquillity and good order.

Some skirmishing at length took place be-

tween the rebel troops and a small band still adhering to the Pasha's cause; but Ismail Bey, who commanded, eventually took refuge with them in a strong fort erected in the vicinity of that city by Sheriffe Ghalib. Turkey-bel-Mass then plundered the treasury and magazines of all the money, stores and provisions, and sailed to Mokhá, which he took possession of, and fortified. There he remained, bidding open defiance to the Pasha for two years; but a naval force sent by the latter destroyed his ships, and some months afterwards the Assaïr Bedowins stormed and retook the town, killing the greater number of the Turks, or driving them into the sea.

Turkey-bel-Mass threw himself into a boat without oars or sails; but, whilst drifting out to sea, was saved by the boats of an English vessel then in the harbour. He was afterwards sent to India, and from thence to Syria.

The Assaïr Bedowins retained possession of the town for some time, plundering it of every valuable.

Their mode of discovering the treasure

concealed by the Banians exhibited great shrewdness. Upon the mud floors of those houses where they suspected it to have been buried they poured a quantity of water, and, judging that the earth had been recently dug up from those spots where the moisture immediately sank and disappeared, they commenced a strict search, and in many instances with the desired success.

CHAPTER XIV.

Anticipated benefits of Steam Navigation—Railroad from Cairo to Suez—Mode of traversing the Desert with Passengers—Passage by the Euphrates—Expedition of Colonel Chesney and Lieutenant Lynch—Importance of the Euphrates' Route—Red Sea always Navigable—Prevalent Winds—Hints for Navigating a Steamer in the Voyage from India—Island of Socotra—North-east Monsoon, &c., &c.

To ascertain how far its passage could be made available for steamers was one of the principal objects to which our attention was directed during the late survey of the Red Sea. Nothing, however, connected with its navigation, beyond what will be found in the preceding chapters, has yet been made public; and, however much their value might have been enhanced, had the following remarks emanated from those more immediately in command of the expedition, yet, as I was long

employed on that duty, and was constantly voyaging along its shores, or sailing between them and India, my remarks on this important subject are offered with some confidence, although they can only derive interest or value from a total absence of all others.

It is almost needless to say there are few subjects which of late years have occupied more general interest and discussion than the establishment of a steam navigation between the Eastern and Western world. The necessity of its final adoption was so obvious, and its importance so vast and striking, that in spite of the chilling influence exerted to stifle or retard it, it nevertheless continued at every interval to thrust itself into notice, and even to excite a degree of interest with the mother country, which she has rarely, excepting in certain important epochs in Indian affairs, been known to exhibit. If the comfort, convenience, and speedy transmission to and fro, of so large a portion of British subjects as are contained in the civil, military, and commercial ranks of the India service, the benefits which might be expected to accrue to the mercantile interests of Britain; or last, but

not least, if the welfare of a hundred millions of our native subjects be not sufficient to justify its immediate adoption, they may perhaps be found in the increased security which in other respects we might hope would attend the bringing our eastern possessions nearer to Britain. Modern history furnishes abundant proof of the difficulty the mother country must experience in exercising a direct control, and in rendering permanent and effectual aid to a distant colony. With India, situated as it is at present, we can never hope to do so; she must for long periods be left wholly to her own resources; but if, on the contrary, a line of steamers was established, opportunities would continually be afforded of conveying thither large bodies of troops, as well as of keeping up that reciprocal intelligence between either state, which must prove of incalculable benefit to both.

In the event of a war breaking out unexpectedly, of what importance might it not prove to India to have a well-organised steam flotilla on the spot? possessing also two thousand miles of coast connected by a chain of military posts, with what facility might not

the troops be exchanged, removed, or thrown suddenly into any given point? For the suppression of pirates, steamers will be found most efficient, their vessels often escaping our sailing-ships in the calms and light breezes prevailing in the eastern seas. It is indeed impossible to view the re-adoption of this old line of route otherwise than as pregnant with events the most important to the civilised world. That immense commerce which has ever flowed between the east and west—which made Tyre mighty, Genoa superb, and the merchants of Venice princes—was turned aside from this channel after the discovery of the passage round the Cape, simply for the two following impediments, which modern skill may soon be expected to surmount.

1st. The perilous and intricate navigation of the Red Sea.

2nd. The expense and labour which vessels incurred in landing, conveying across the Desert, and re-shipping their cargoes on the Mediterranean.

The time seems fast approaching when steamers, from possessing less cumbrous machinery, or from other causes, will be enabled

to carry cargoes; and it will subsequently be shown that to such vessels the Red Sea would afford no impediment.

The second is a question of great importance. Mohammed 'Alí contemplates laying down a railroad between Cairo and Suez, and it is said requires pecuniary aid from our government to complete it. If so, let it be granted. A footing in Egypt of this nature would be invaluable, as it would give us at all times a right of passage. I have, however, always contemplated that Egypt, the highway between Europe and India, must, sooner or later, be ours. How gladly its present wretched inhabitants would hail the change, let those answer who have visited it, instead of drawing their ideas of the government of its enlightened ruler from reports current in Europe.

To return, however, to the subject of the passage through Egypt. I have already expressed an opinion that Suez may be considered the most eligible terminal port for the transmission of merchandise, and passengers who do not prefer visiting Thebes. The upper part of the Red Sea presents no greater

impediments to a steamer than the lower portion. The ancients, indeed, adopted more southern ports, at an enormous increase of land and river carriage, because their rude vessels were unable to encounter the prevailing north-westerly breeze in and below the Sea of Suez.

If the railroad be laid down, all difficulties between Suez and Cairo disappear; but if not, as the distance is only eighty-two miles, and as level as any Macadamised road in England, we have only to establish wheeled vehicles on it, which would have been long since done had the country been in European hands. The rising of the Nile offers no impediment to the conveyance of goods through Egypt; but, on the contrary, by filling the canal which connects one of its principal branches with the port of Alexandria, the communication is maintained by water between Cairo and that city at other periods of the year *.

* Much has been written on this "passage of the Desert." Patent springs for camel saddles were invented; masks to protect the face from the scorching rays of an Egyptian sun; green spectacles, umbrellas, tents, &c. &c. have also been recommended; all, no doubt, very comfortable, and for invalids very necessary,

Every facility has constantly been afforded by the Pasha's government to travellers passing through his dominions, but for merchandise some duty will of course be fixed; and to this end, several negotiations, before steam navigation was thought of, had been set on foot with the Egyptian rulers, but their short-sighted policy always interfered to prevent any satisfactory arrangement. Our influence in Egyptian affairs was not then what it is now, and I contemplate no difficulty in settling the matter with the present Pasha. Five per cent. on all imported

but for them only. Let not others take alarm at such fearful preparations: to the latter the following hints are addressed. Camels are ungainly-looking animals. Select, however, one rather slender, and which its owner will recommend as being a good trotter. Look that your water-skins are sound; put your bed across your saddle; provide yourself with one meal for the road; leave Suez about noon, and trot half the distance, which will be accomplished towards eleven at night. Sup and sleep there. Start again at daybreak, and you will arrive in Cairo about noon of the same day. Be not alarmed at the idea of trotting; for although the camel's walk is execrable, its shuffling trot will be found not more uneasy than that of a horse; and now that the communication is becoming more general, it is to be hoped we shall soon have wheeled carriages on this route. I should recommend an omnibus. No fear need be entertained of the sun's power, or sleeping on the ground, exposed to the dew and night airs. Fevers are almost unknown on the Desert, and the air is at all times of uncommon purity.

goods, the same as at Jiddah, would be very reasonable for both parties. In a preceding page of this volume it has been shown that the trade between Egypt and India, at present centered at Jiddah, occupies ten thousand tons of shipping, independent of that carried on in large bágalás, amounting to as much more.

It is true that oriental habits are in general too firmly rooted to admit of any sudden change, but the natives are keenly alive to their own interest in all commercial affairs; and the advantages of a mercantile steamer over a sailing-vessel would soon become too apparent to be overlooked. Thus the trade, in the course of a few seasons, would be transferred from Jiddah to Suez; that of India would gradually return into its ancient channel, and the face and condition of the country through which it would pass will again be changed.

The passage by way of the Euphrates has been held by some to possess advantages over that by the Red Sea; and although the latter had been proved to be constantly avail-

able during two-thirds of the year, yet it was inconsiderately rejected in favour of the former, which had never been tried, and where success was extremely problematical. Colonel Chesney has reached Bussorah, and, as far as published reports enable us to judge, the intricacies of its channel—the shallowness of the water—the rapidity of its current—and the fury of the Desert tornadoes which sweep over it, will render its adoption at certain seasons most difficult if not impracticable. On this subject, however, a difference of opinion still exists; and to place it beyond doubt, his Majesty's government have lately despatched a second mission under Lieutenant Lynch of the Indian navy, to whose indefatigable exertions, and intimate acquaintance with the language and manners of the natives, the former expedition, of which he commanded the naval portion, was greatly indebted. Such qualities eminently fit him for the duty he has now proceeded on, and which has also for its object the attaining a political ascendancy over the several tribes on the basin of the Euphrates. He

will at least place the matter at rest, and will, it is to be hoped, be successful in both.

The country forming the basin of the Euphrates, like that of Egypt, owes its fertility to the annual overflowing of its river. The width of the cultivated ground does not average more than two or three miles, and on this strip the agricultural classes reside: the nomadic hordes are again dependent on this class; and the banks of most parts of the river being low, a steamer traversing it would command the whole fertile and inhabited districts, and consequently every portion of the country over which it might be necessary to extend our influence.

Though the difficulties of this route may be very great, yet, if these prove surmountable, its utility, under certain peculiar circumstances, would more than counterbalance them. Should war, pestilence, or other unforeseen contingencies, temporarily interfere with the Red Sea route, we should then have another at our command. This line might also be expected to benefit and extend our commerce in the countries through which it

leads. As illustrative of this we may mention the fact that the partial opening of trade by the late expedition has already more than doubled that of every portion of the Levant at all connected with its operations.

The Red Sea may be navigated at all seasons, and the idea that it is fast filling up is quite chimerical. The reefs offer no impediment; indeed it has been shown in a preceding portion of this memoir that the shelter they afford would, in some cases, facilitate, as they merely line the shores on either hand above Jiddah to the Straits of Jubal; while the average width of the clear sea is one hundred miles, and but one reef, the Dædalus, occurs within the whole of this space, which may, moreover, be pronounced unfathomable. Neither can its currents be considered as affecting the duration of the passage to any sensible extent; and although its winds might occasionally retard a steamer's progress, there are times in which they would materially assist her.

It is very erroneously supposed that the

monsoons extend to the Red Sea; but, in reality, the wind blows with equal violence from opposite quarters at either extremity, leaving a considerable space between them subjected to light airs and calms. North-westerly winds prevail throughout the year in its northern portion, but during the months of June, July, and August they attain their greatest strength, blowing home without the Straits of Bab el Mandoub to the very limits of the south-west monsoon. The example of the Honourable Company's ship of war Clive shows that within these months sailing-vessels would perform the voyage as quickly, or more so, than a steamer, which would be unavoidably delayed at the different depôts. The average of the Hugh Lindsay's passage from Suez to Bombay is twenty-two days; the Clive, in the voyage to which I allude, performed it in eighteen.

These north-westers blow with unequal force, but very rarely exceeding in strength a double-reefed topsail breeze. Their duration rarely exceeds three days, and they are usually succeeded by light breezes

Within the southern portion of the Red Sea southerly winds prevail for nine months in the year, although in October, November, and December they not unfrequently blow home to Suez. On ordinary occasions their violence is not perceptible above one hundred and fifty miles above Mokhá, and an inspection of the Hugh Lyndsay's journal for November will show that neither of these winds retarded her progress to any considerable extent.

But of all doubts hitherto raised as to the practicability of an uninterrupted communication with India by the present plan, the only one worthy of attention is, whether steamers could effect a passage to the Red Sea in the months of July, August, and September. Had India, however, been less distant from England, how soon would this difficulty have vanished! We should then have discovered that, instead of being obstacles to the constancy of our intercourse, their unvarying character might be turned to good account: that, as in the sea itself, by substituting sails for steam, we should be enabled to effect a great saving, not only in

fuel, but in the wear. and tear of the machinery likewise.

Let us now consider the most judicious course for a steamer to adopt in proceeding on this voyage. It is generally believed that she would experience difficulty in effecting an offing from the harbour. Sailing-vessels, it is admitted, do so, for the wind blows in gusts or squalls, succeeded by calms; but it is then that a steamer would find her advantage, and I will venture to assert that, unless under most unprecedented circumstances, there does not occur one single day during the whole season in which a steamer could not gain her object in the course of a few hours. This done, when the force of the wind is sufficient to lessen the progress of the vessel to three and a half, or four knots, no practical man acquainted with the properties of a steamer would think of putting her head to it, but would keep away three or four points, and set her fore and aft sails. She may then put out her fires, and proceed under sails only, on the starboard tack, as there is always a leading wind, which becomes fairer as she advances; and if the fires

are kept in, the sails will take off the strain from the machinery. On arriving in latitude 9° N., the force of the monsoon will be found to have abated. Let her in that parallel, or further to the southward, if necessary, steam direct across to the African shore, keeping gradually away as she approaches it, and being careful to make Cape Gardefui, even should she be proceeding to the Island of Socotra, for the currents of this coast there run with great rapidity. As soon as she rounds the Cape, calms and light breezes will be experienced on the African shore, which should be kept close on board, until she approaches the straits. By adopting this route the distance would not be increased more than eight or nine hundred miles, and would with ease be accomplished in twelve, or at furthest in thirteen days.

It has been too hastily assumed that the north-east monsoon would not retard the intercourse between India and the Red Sea. But in the months of December, January, and February its violence in the open sea is scarcely inferior to that of the south-west monsoon. Nor do I therefore conceive it

would be advisable to proceed direct against it, but would recommend that the Arabian shore be kept on board, until she should be able to stand across to Bombay with a fair wind.

Much has been written upon the subject of the size and description of vessel best adapted for this navigation, as well as the regulations with respect to passengers, letters, &c. The two new steamers sent out by the East India Company appear to be admirably suited for this duty; and the scheme being now fairly set afloat, the experience of a few seasons will be sufficient to place these matters on the best possible footing.

I cannot, however, take leave of a subject so important without adding a few remarks respecting the depôts. I am unhesitatingly of opinion that, unless the maritime survey now engaged in the investigation of that part of the African coast within the Gulf of Aden should succeed in finding some insular point within a harbour near Cape Gardefui, that the islands of Socotra and Kamarán will be found the best adapted for such a purpose. Socotra has no good single harbour, but it

has *two* good ports, Bunder Golanseer, available in the north-east monsoon, the other Bunder Delechí, equally available in the south-west monsoon. Both have fresh water in their vicinity; in both the depth of water admits of vessels proceeding within a few yards of the shore, wholly without the reach of the swell. A hulk shifted from one port to the other, according to the season, would at once obviate the objection to its single harbour, and at the same time render us independent of the natives, whose want of boats and indolent habits have hitherto, when steamers arrived on their coast, been the cause of considerable delay. It has been feared that tempestuous weather in the vicinity of this island during the south-west monsoon would form an objection, but by adopting the proposed line of route, a steamer would find little or no difficulty in making it. Within the Red Sea, Kamarán would form the best station. It has an excellent harbour, is easy of access, and the Pasha has lately ceded it for this purpose to the East India Company. Should it be found necessary to establish other depôts

within the Sea, there is an abundance of well sheltered harbours on either shore, which will be found suited to the purpose.

In concluding, I may add that it must prove a source of extreme congratulation to every individual interested in the commercial prosperity of his native country and her dependencies, to find that now the question of a communication between India and the mother country, by means at once rapid and regular, is fairly before the public, that the liberality of the British government presents the fairest hopes of its final and complete establishment*.

* The greater portion of the matter which appears in this chapter was given by the author during his examination before the House of Commons in June of the present year. A small portion has likewise appeared in Dr. Lardner's *Letter on Steam Communication with India by the Red Sea.*

CHAPTER XV.

Conclusion of Eastern Survey — Ras Bernos — Cape Nose — Mohammedan Tomb — Landmark — Jebel Makoear — Isle of St. John — Coral Belt — Singular Excavations — Emerald Mountains — Vindication of the Traveller Bruce.

CAPTAIN Moresby having completed the Eastern Coast, the Palinurus proceeded to Ras Bernos, the spot at which their labours terminated on her former voyage, in order to survey the unexplored part of the Nubian coast to Cape Calmez.

We first anchored under Cape Nose, a name which its appearance sanctions, and which has consequently been retained on our map. Near the extremity of a low sandy spot, projecting in a southerly direction from the base of some moderately elevated hills, stands a rude tomb, constructed of wood. In earlier times, it served as a land-mark to the mariner, and is now occasionally resorted to again for devotional purposes by the Arabs. It

London, John Murray, 1839.

appears to occupy the site of a better constructed edifice, the remains of which may be traced in the sand for some distance. I think it not improbable that, during the time the Greeks and Romans retained possession of Berenice, a lighthouse might have been standing on this spot. By the chart it will be seen that a beacon so situated would have enabled them to approach during the night, and then to run close to their port without danger. The Palinurus anchored on the south side of the Cape, on a narrow belt of soundings, extending about two hundred yards from the shore; but the numerous reefs in its vicinity, and its offering no protection against southerly winds, will most probably prevent other vessels from following our example.

Off this island lies Jebel Makowar *, which, independent of its elongated quoin-like shape, has no remarkable appearance. In its neighbourhood lies the island of St. John, about six miles in circumference, rising gradually in broken ridges, and whitened in many places by the dung of numerous sea-fowl. Its elevation may be calculated at

* The Konaki of Don Juan de Castro.

about nine hundred feet, and it is visible at a distance of eight leagues.

A coral belt, about a quarter of a mile in width, and nearly dry, rising almost perpendicularly from a great depth, encircles the whole island, so that there is no anchorage; and the Palinurus, during her stay, was sesured to a grapnel, fastened in one of the hollows of the rocks. Of course, while thus situated, we were entirely at the mercy of the winds, for if they had shifted suddenly, we had no means of escaping.

We visited with lights a singular excavation on the eastern side of the island. After descending through numerous windings over a broad slippery rock, we arrived at some water, which, although of a very indifferent quality, is drank by the Arabs, who are left here to catch turtle. On the south-east side, a few yards from the beach, we discovered numerous and extensive excavations, which have apparently been made at a very early period; they occupy a large extent of ground, and are continued upwards, a third of the hill's ascent, on which fragments of pottery and glass lie strewn about. Many of them are

thirty yards broad and fifty deep, and the sides of several have been built up so as to form habitations. In the pits, and on other parts of the mountain, we picked up several pieces of the green crystal, which appears to be of the same quality as that described by Bruce, in his visit to the Emerald Mountains on the Egyptian coast. He observes, " that the green crystal, which is the Siberget and Bilm of the Ethiopians—perhaps Zumrud, the Smaragdus described by Pliny, is by no means the emerald known since the discovery of the New World, whose first character absolutely defeats its intention; the true Peruvian emerald being only equal in hardness to the ruby."

There is little doubt, however, but that St. John's was the island to which the Greeks transported their criminals for the purpose of seeking for what they considered emeralds, and that the excavations we discovered were mines.

While stating the whole of the facts which came under my observation during our stay in the Red Sea, connected with Mr. Bruce's chart and narrative of his voyages to its several ports, it is by no means my intention

to revert to the general question of the merits of this celebrated traveller, as the subject has been so often fully inquired into by writers of great name, and his just title to the popularity which his travels have acquired has been so ably and satisfactorily established in an interesting publication of recent date.

I shall in the first place solicit the reader's attention to the observations I have to offer on the question of the accuracy of Bruce's chart of the Arabian Gulf, which is published with his travels. The testimony of those who have had the best opportunities of deciding on this question has been contradictory. Some, as Dr. Clark, General Baird, and the officers who accompanied him on the expedition to Egypt, bear testimony to its accuracy, whereas others assert its deficiency in this respect, and insinuate a charge of plagiarism grounded on the "suspicious coincidence" which exists between the positions assigned by Bruce, and those given by Niebuhr to the same places. The evidence of the former party has been deemed too vague to be of much value, whilst that of the latter has been considered fully borne out by the result of Captain Court's observations.

Before stating the result of the recent survey conducted by Captains Elwon and Moresby, which embraced the western coast of the Red Sea, not visited by Niebuhr, but where the geographical positions assigned by Bruce to the places at which he touched coincide as strikingly and closely with those assigned by our survey as did the corresponding observations of the two travellers on the opposite coast, I must premise that undue weight has been attached to the assertion, that the observations from which Bruce obtained his latitudes were made at sea, whereas those of Niebuhr were taken on land. This statement has been brought forward with a view of making the coincidence between their observations appear the more surprising and suspicious. The fact, however, is, that from Tór to Loheïya both travellers performed the journey in boats precisely in the same manner; and though from Loheïya to Mokhá Niebuhr travelled by land, yet it is fair to conclude that the zeal which prompted Bruce to construct plans of all the harbours and roadsteads along the coast at which he touched would have induced him to take advantage of every

opportunity he enjoyed of leaving the boat to make his astronomical observations on shore.

I shall proceed to expose, in a tabular form, a list of some places situated on the coast and adjacent islands, with the positions laid down by Bruce, and those of the same places extracted from our chart. An examination of this table will, I am confident, convince the reader that a great degree of credit is due to Mr. Bruce for the general accuracy displayed in his observations, notwithstanding the difficulties under which he laboured; and the facts therein exhibited will, I think, also show that this part of the charge which some have attempted to bring against the reputation of Bruce, and which, as far as I am aware, has never been satisfactorily repelled by his defenders, is totally unmerited.

I shall commence with the observations made during his first voyage from Kosaïr to Jebel Makowar, and subsequently from the former port, by way of Tór, Yembo', and Jiddah to Loheïya, and eventually to Massowah. The longitudes I shall only contrast when they are specified either in the text, or in the Appendix to his travels.

Names of Places.	Latitude by Bruce.	Latitude by Survey.	Difference.	Remarks.
	° ′ ″	° ′ ″	° ′ ″	
Kosaïr . .	26 7 51	26 6 59	0 0 52	Long.—34° 4′ 15″ E. Bruce; 34° 23′ 30″, Survey.
Cape Nose, Ras Bernos, or Ras el Ans	24 3 00	23 54 00	0 09 00	This latitude is taken from the chart, where the Cape is not distinctly defined. Bruce places but little reliance on this observation, for he says (vol. ii. p. 113), "I computed myself to be about four miles off the meridian distance when I made the observation, and take the latitude to be about 24° 2′ on the centre of the island."
St. John's, or Bruce Island	23 38 00	23 36 00	0 2 00	Bruce, shortly before anchoring at this island, observes (vol. ii. p. 115), "that he was sure of his latitude;" he does not however specify it in his Narrative, and I have taken its position from his chart. From St. John's he returned to Cossier; on the 5th of April he quitted Cossier, and proceeded northward towards Tór, in the Sea of Suez.
Jaffatine Isl.	27 11 00	27 11 30	0 0 30	This latitude is taken from the chart. No observation inserted in the Narrative or Appendix.
Shadwán, S.E. point	27 19 00	27 27 00	0 8 0	Taken from Bruce's chart.
Tor . . .	28 14 00	28 14 6	0 6	Ditto. Bruce remained here several days.
Rás or Cape Mohammed	27 45 00	27 43 00	0 6 0	Lord Valentia (in vol. iii. p. 281) has stated the latitude of Rás Mohammed, as given by Bruce, to be 27° 54′, whereas the Cape is not only marked at 27° 40′ on the chart, but Bruce also says, in his Narrative (vol. ii. p. 141), "At night, by an observation of two stars on the meridian, I concluded the latitude of Ras Mohammed to be 27° 54′. This must be understood of the mountain or high land which forms behind the Cape, and not the low point. The latter extends three leagues to the southward of the high land." Therefore, three leagues or 9′ S.; lat. of high land 27° 54′; which would place the low point in 27° 45′ lat. N., according to Bruce—a difference of 3′ from our result, but of 9′ from Niebuhr's.
Hasani .	24 54 00	24 58 00	0 4 00	
Yembo'. .	24 3 35	24 5 20	0 1 45	It is again at least singular that Lord Valentia states Bruce's latitude of this port at 24o 5′, whereby it is again made to agree with Niebuhr's. I take the latitude of Bruce from the text (vol. ii. p. 158). In the Appendix (vol. vii. p. 172) the altitude of the star Pegasus is given, from which this is computed. In the Appendix (vol. vii. p. 381) Bruce gives the longitude, deduced from two observations of Jupiter's satellites, at 38° 16′ 30″, exactly agreeing with what we made the longitude deduced from Jiddah, supposing that place to be in 39° 13′, as we and several other ships have determined it.

Names of Places.	Latitude by Bruce.	Latitude by Survey.	Difference.	Remarks.
	° ′ ″	° ′ ″	° ′ ″	
Baraïka	23 36 9	23 36 40	0 00 31	Narrative, vol. ii. p. 159.
Sherm				
Rabegh .	22 46 00	22 43 30	0 2 30	Ditto, vol. ii. p. 161.
Ras Hâtaba	22 1 00	22 00 10	0 0 50	
Sherm Ooboor or Charles River	21 45 00	21 42 30	0 2 30	
Jiddah . .	21 28 1	21 28 30	0 00 29	This latitude is deduced from the means of six stellar altitudes given in the Appendix, vol. ii. p. 372; the data and calculations, the latter by Dr. Maskelyne, from which the longitude is deduced, are given in the same volume, p. 382; and there Bruce made it in longitude 39°16′ 45″; we made the longitude 39° 16′ 00″.
Gooss . .	20 50 00	20 47 30	0 02 30	
Merkát . .	20 29 00	20 29 40	0 09 20	
Mersa Ibrahim	20 8 00	20 8 40	0 00 40	
Rás el Askar	19 55 00	19 51 10	0 3 50	
Gonfodah .	19 7 00	19 7 30	0 00 30	
Rás Hali .	18 36 00	18 35 15	0 00 45	
Manoud .	18 25 00	18 16 10	0 08 50	
Dahaban .	18 11 00	18 5 40	0 5 20	
Kotumbal .	17 57 00	17 53 47	0 03 13	
Ghisan .	16 45 00	16 53 5	0 08 5	
Loheïya .	15 40 52	15 41 20	0 00 28	Bruce, by means of two observations of Jupiter's satellites, makes the longitude of Loheïya (vol. vii. Appendix p. 384) 42° 55′ 15″ E. The Benares made it, deduced from that of Mokhá, 42° 47′ 30. In the text (vol. ii. p. 219) the longitude is given 41° 58′ 15″; but this must be a mistake, since the lines give what I have stated.
Kamarán .	15 20 00	15 20 12	0 00 12	Kamarán, by some mistake, probably of the press, is stated in the text (p. 127) to be in latitude 15° 39′; but the chart places it in the latitude I have inserted.
Foosht . .	15 59 43	16 10 00	0 10 17	
Hodeidah .	14 48 00	14 47 20	0 00 40	
Jebel Feir .	15 38 00	15 32 50	0 5 10	
Mokhá . .	13 20 00	13 19 55	0 00 5	
Cape Babel-mandeb	12 39 20	12 41 00	0 01 40	The station where the latitude was observed by the Benares was on the N.E. extremity of the island, on a projecting point; but Bruce appears by his Narrative to have observed his on the S.E. There is a difference of one mile between the two.
Crab Island	13 2 45	13 3 30	0 0 45	
Racka Garbía	15 33 15	15 32 50	0 0 23	
Dobelew Isl., extreme of the village	15 42 22	15 45 40	0 2 18	
Ras Shonk	15 30 30	15 35 20	0 4 50	
Ras Antalow	15 50 30	15 53 50	0 3 20	
Massowah .	15 35 5	15 36 00	0 0 55	

In the foregoing table it will be observed that the plans I have chosen are taken from the chart, in succession as they lie along Mr. Brûce's track, a preference alone being given to such as are remarkable either for their magnitude or importance. Ample testimony is here borne to Mr. Bruce's accuracy as an observer, not only of the latitude (especially when he could take his observations on land), but also of longitude; for he has fixed the latter with so much truth, whenever he had the opportunity, that it may be questioned if we shall ever be enabled to attain it at those places with greater precision. In the table given by Lord Valentia*, where the results of Niebuhr's and Bruce's observations are compared, we find that of eleven positions which are contrasted, seven agree within the mile. The latitude assigned to Rás Mohammed by Bruce differs in reality, as I have already observed, nine miles from the position given to it by Niebuhr; and as the data from which the latitudes of Yembo', Jiddah, and Loheïya were determined were calculated by the late

* See Travels, vol. iii., p. 281.

Astronomer Royal, no suspicion can be attached to these. This would reduce the number of Bruce's positions, against which, on account of their approximating so closely to those of Niebuhr, any charge of plagiarism can be brought, to three—a proportion not so great as that exhibited in the table I have given above; where we shall find, that out of thirty-seven latitudes which are compared, fourteen agree within the mile, twenty within two, and twenty-eight within four miles; and these observations, it must be remarked, refer not to the east coast of the sea alone, where Bruce had the positions of Niebuhr before him, but are taken indiscriminately from both sides.

The general accuracy here displayed well merits our admiration, when we reflect on the many difficulties which our traveller had to encounter, deprived as he was of the resources with which both Niebuhr and those who, after Bruce appeared on the same field, were amply provided. A knowledge of these facts is not only important, as they tend to clear the character of a distinguished individual, but of great interest in a geographical point of view;

for in place of the uncertainty which has hitherto existed on the subject, we may now justly infer that the same degree of correctness displayed in Bruce's observations along the sea-coast will be found whenever he has determined the geographical positions of those places situated in the interior of Abyssinia to which European travellers have not since penetrated.

It has been truly predicted by Dr. Murray, that "in all probability some time will elapse before another traveller observes the satellites of Jupiter at Gondar." Men of science have visited Abyssinia since Bruce, but no person has, I believe, succeeded in penetrating so far as that celebrated traveller.

The account given by him of his visit to the islands of Jebel Zumrud and Makowar has been condemned as fabulous and entirely unworthy of credit, on the following grounds:

1st. The erroneous positions which Bruce has given to these islands, placing Jebel Zumrud in lat. 25° 3′ north (which is 1° 15′ north of its true position), and Makowar in lat. 24° 2′, instead of 20° 38′ north.

The second objection stated is, the short

period which Bruce has allowed himself for the voyage from Kosaïr to the latter place, which, being a distance of nearly 400 miles, could not possibly have been performed in four days, as he asserts.

3rdly. Bruce has stated that at Makowar, in lat. 24° 2′ north, the Arab vessels make their point of departure for the opposite coast, whereas it has been asserted by his critics that the native boats cross to the Arab coast when they arrive in lat. 20° 38′, the situation of the true Makowar, which, they suppose, must have misled our traveller.

Of these objections to the veracity of Bruce's account, and the authenticity of his visit to these islands, all those which refer to Makowar hinge on the position of that island. Were the circumstances fully and fairly stated in the above passages, little could be said in defence of Bruce. But this has not been the case, nor does it appear that his critics possessed a local knowledge of this portion of the Red Sea, which would alone have justified them in making so outrageous an attack on the reputation and memory of a meritorious traveller. It is true that a Jebel Makowar

lies in lat. 20° 38′ north; but it should have been stated at the same time that another island, called also Makowar, exists off Cape Nose, of which island the position given by Bruce, viz. 24° 2′, differs from that assigned to it by the survey only twelve miles. This reduces the distance between Kosaïr and the island to one hundred and fifty instead of four hundred miles, and places that portion of Bruce's account within the bounds of probability and truth. Bruce was perfectly correct in stating that at Makowar, in 24° 2′ north lat., the Arab boats quit the African coast for that of Arabia. This is the case also with the southern Makowar, as mentioned by Lord Valentia, but with this difference, that vessels coming from the north strike off to the eastward at the northern, whilst those from the south, as from Massowah, Suákin, &c., leave this coast at the southern Makowar. Bruce was not correct in stating that vessels from the south proceeded so far north as the Makowar he visited, before taking their departure for the east coast. This name, which applies equally to both islands, signifies what in seaman's phrase is termed a "departure."

The just remark made by Bruce in the part of his travels where the account of this visit is given, viz., that confusion of names was very general in the Red Sea, ought to have been better considered by his critics before characterising his statements in the manner they have done as false, romantic, absurd, &c.

To this confusion of names, which every person who has explored this region must have remarked, we ought to attribute the misunderstanding existing on the subject of Bruce's visit to the island which he calls Jebel Zumrud, or Emerald Island, and which his critics have assumed to be Jebel Siberget, or St. John's. Were this assumption correct, Bruce's account of his trip would indeed appear inconsistent with facts, and irreconcilable with the actual situation of the island which his commentators attempt to prove was the object of his visit. I cannot, however, find that sufficient reasons have been advanced in support of this conjecture, unless indeed advantage be taken of the confusion of names, against which Bruce himself repeatedly warns his readers to be on their guard. Speaking of the Arabs, he says,

"they are never at a loss for a name, and those who do not understand their language always believe them." Of the truth of this remark our experience afforded us frequent proofs. We found that the fishermen often applied the name of one island to another, and even the pilots did not on many occasions ascertain their real names until they landed on them. A careful comparison, however, of his account of this visit with the actually existing localities will, I think, divest his narrative of that character of suspicion which some have attempted to throw upon it. There is little doubt that Bruce must have alluded to the Island of Wádí Jemál, the true latitude of which corresponds pretty nearly with that assigned by him to his Emerald Island, a title which he may have bestowed on it himself, or, what is more likely, it may have received from the Arabs, who probably thus named it in consequence of its vicinity to the emerald mines or mountains situated on the adjacent continent. The distance between the island and opposite main, as given by Bruce, applies exactly to Wádí Jemál, and the correctness

of his description of that part of the shore on which he landed, and which, as he remarked, is still called Sael (Sáhel), is fully confirmed by Belzoni, who visited the same place in 1816. Bruce's remarks respecting the breakers, which he says "run off at all points around the island" of Makowar, and the fact, which he observed, of there being no soundings even close to the island, will be found perfectly correct by referring either to the chart of the late survey, or to the sailing directions which will accompany it. This traveller's description of the general appearance and features of the land in the vicinity of these islands (Wádí Jemál and Makowar) and Cape Nose, was observed by all the officers on board the surveying vessel to be so correct and circumstantial, that they could not entertain a suspicion that what Bruce has said on the subject had been borrowed from any other author. The appearance which the island presented when first seen by Bruce, "rising like a pillar out of the sea," does not certainly apply to Wádí Jemál, but illusions of a similar nature, depending on atmospheric refraction, were

so familiar to us during our survey of this region, that we never hesitated to attribute the above inconsistency to this cause. Such optical phenomena we also observed to occur more frequently, and in a more striking manner, about the place I am now considering than in any other part of the Red Sea.

The feat performed by Bruce on the occasion of this voyage, of taking the large mat sail of the boat in his arms and cutting it adrift, has excited the scepticism of his critics. I may, however, remark that I have frequently observed at Jiddah a single boatman manage the large sail of a bagalá with so little difficulty, as to leave no doubt in my mind of the possibility of Mr. Bruce's story.

Upon the whole, it is candid to admit that Bruce's account of his visit to these islands is by no means clearly or perspicuously narrated. But surely this defect cannot justify the harsh comments which have been made on it by those who have never visited the locality, but have formed a premature decision on its merits from hearsay evidence given by natives, who, it is beyond doubt, referred to latitudes totally different from

those which Bruce traversed in the course of his journey.

The information from which the following observations on the island of Dahalak were drawn up, has been kindly furnished to me by the officers of the Honourable Company's ship Benares, who were charged with the survey of the southern half of the Red Sea. I have been allowed the perusal of notes taken on the spot, as well as to copy a sketch of the plan of the island and the surrounding islands, which will greatly facilitate the comprehension of the subject.

Bruce's visit to Dahalak, and the information he has published respecting it, have been treated with as little courtesy as was the account of his trip to the islands which we have just been considering. The whole narrative has been, in like manner, unhesitatingly pronounced as untrue, and the fact of his having visited the island at all has been called in question. I shall briefly state the leading objections urged in defence of this uncharitable view of Bruce's merits. They are taken from the account of Captain Court and Mr. Salt's journey across, and survey of the island,

a plan of which has been published with Lord Valentia's chart of the Red Sea. It has been alleged that Captain Court's survey has proved that no such harbour as Dobelew, described by Bruce, is discoverable in the island: that his account of the number of tanks, amounting to three hundred and seventy, is erroneous, as, after a minute investigation, twenty only could be found: that what he has observed of the animals drinking out of the cisterns and washing in them, is completely falsified by Mr. Salt's statement that the cisterns were vaulted over.

These are nearly all, or at least the essential points, which have been advanced to prove that almost all he has published respecting this island is mere fabrication.

On perusing Mr. Salt's report of this survey, it must at once strike the reader that the examination made in the course of his journey across the island in company with Captain Court, is not entitled to be considered complete, or even minute. On the contrary, the survey appears to have been executed in a hurried manner, and a comparison of the plan of the island, as given by

these gentlemen, with the sketch taken from the late trigonometrical survey, demonstrate that the former is at the same time incorrect and incomplete. In fact a bare inspection of their route, which I have traced on the sketch, will show that a very small portion of the whole surface of the island could have come under their personal observation. The Benares' chart of the island establishes, beyond a doubt, the existence of the harbour of Dobelew, formed between Ras el Shoel and Irwee, as described by Bruce, and his description of its narrow entrance, the great rapidity of the tides, and the uneven and rocky bottom, have been all found to be perfectly correct.

Regarding the tanks, the officers of the Benares could not ascertain their exact number, though more than one hundred and twenty, hewn out of the rock, were shown to them. These were not all so protected as to prevent the approach of animals, as mentioned by Mr. Salt, but were particularly remarked by the officers of the Benares to be partly filled up with dung of animals and filth. The natives stated to the party that

SKETCH

Shewing the difference between the Coast line of

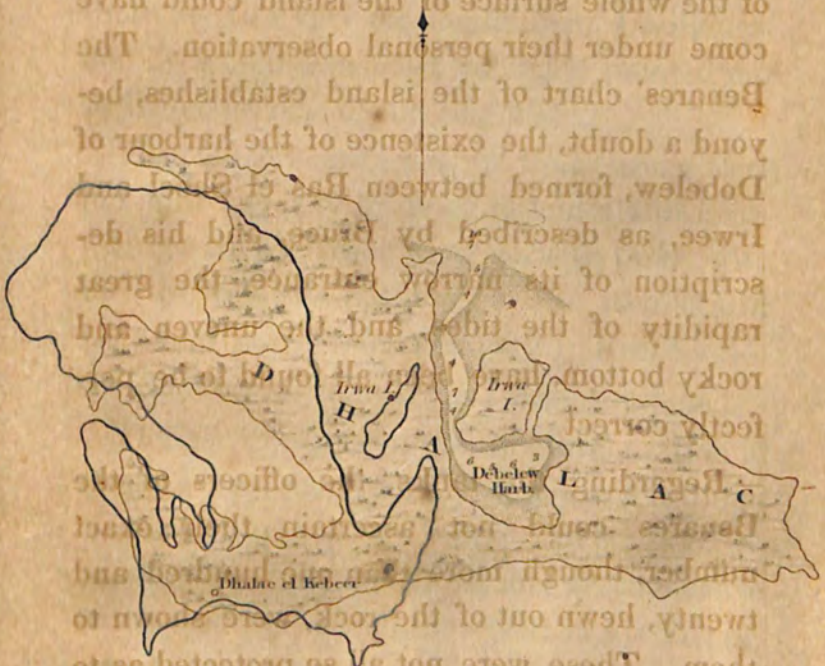
DHALAC ISLAND,

as delineated by Lord Valencia:

and

That obtained by the late Survey.

The Black line representing the former.



London, John Murray, 1820.

John Arrowsmith.

the number of tanks exceeded that given by our traveller.

Mr. Salt was correctly informed by the natives that Abdul Gaffer's tomb was situated on the island of Norrah, off Cape Antalow, and not on Dahalak, as Bruce states; but there are two very old tombs near Dhollatim, one of which was most probably pointed out to Bruce as that of the Sheïkh.

The officers engaged on this survey were not able in every instance to make the bearings given by Bruce to agree with their own; but the relative positions of the islands will be found correct, by comparing Bruce's descriptions with the sketch I have furnished.

The foregoing remarks, in corroboration of Bruce's general accuracy, are given without comment,—they are naked facts; but so striking do they appear to me, so conclusive is the evidence which they bear in his favour, that I experience the most heartfelt satisfaction in contributing my humble efforts to those of other travellers, who have sought to rescue an illustrious name from the obloquy to which it has so long and so unjustly been consigned. Before I dismiss the subject, it

remains for me to offer a few remarks arising out of what has thus come before me.

After his perusal of the facts here adduced, let me draw the reader's attention to the observations of Lord Valentia, as applied to Bruce, page 223, vol. ii.

"When a person attempts to give geographical information, it is necessary that this information should be accurate, and that he should not advance as certain a single circumstance of which he had not previously informed himself."

Yet the noble traveller considers hearsay evidence (for he never saw the northern Makowar) not only sufficient to warrant his impugning the veracity of that information which subsequent observation has proved to be wholly correct, but also to justify his bringing forward a charge the most grave that can be preferred against a traveller or a gentleman, which also proves to be equally captious and groundless.

All charts are, or ought to be, accurate in proportion to the means afforded for, and the time consumed in, constructing of them. Lord Valentia, whose observations on these

several points are thus wholly incorrect, was nearly two years in the Red Sea,—Bruce was five months: the former was provided with chronometers and other costly instruments, and was accommodated in a vessel "completely officered and equipped as a man-of-war,"—"and that everything might be completed to his comfort, the commander was directed to keep a table for him at the expense of the East India Company." Bruce hires at his own cost a boat, the planks of which are sewn together with cordage. In this crazy bark he traverses the whole length of a sea (nearly one thousand two hundred miles), the navigation of which has, from the earliest to modern times, been considered perilous, even to a proverb. Lord Valentia sails under the auspices of the then Governor General of India, the Marquis Hastings, and under the powerful protection of the English flag, which the late expedition to Egypt had taught even barbarians to respect. Bruce journeys as a private gentleman, with the sole noble object of enlarging our stock of geographical knowledge. He had no government to look to his comforts,—his resources were all his own.

CHAPTER XVI.

Berenice—Belzoni — Wilkinson — Plan of Houses — Temple— Antiquities—Ancient Key—Temple — Greek Inscriptions and Statue—Hieroglyphics—Ptolemy, Strabo, Pliny, Robertson— P. Sicard — Author's Opinion — Latitude — Proofs of having discovered the Ancient City of Berenice—"Berenice's Bodkin" —Fuel for Steam vessels — Habesh—Arab Fables — Capture of a Devil Fish.

Hazy weather, and an expected southerly wind, which would have rendered the vessel's situation very precarious, obliged us to run for shelter to the north-east extreme of Foul Bay, where we anchored within a short distance of the ruins of the ancient seaport of Berenice. This lone spot, now untenanted even by the rude wanderer of the Desert, was once enlivened by the busy din of commerce, and its traffickers, journeying from "furthest Ind" in rude and fragile barks, cast anchor on its wild, desolate shore. Now how changed the scene! Ages have since swept over it, and mounds of sand, wafted hither by desert storms, cover its edifices. Its harbour is choked and empty; and the ruins of one

small temple alone remains to indicate its former importance.

Since my arrival in Bombay, I have been enabled to procure Mr. Belzoni's travels, and from them I learn, that though that gentleman, from the direction of the route he had taken, supposed these ruins to be near the position assigned by D'Anville to Berenice, yet he had no instruments to ascertain the fact, and so doubtful was he as to its identity, that he traversed the sea-coast a day's journey to the southward, in order to ascertain if other ruins, corresponding still more closely with that situation, might not be discovered. The means he possessed for excavating did not admit of his making a discovery of any Greek remains. These latter were objects most essential to the decision of the point in question, which has so long been the subject of doubt and discussion with geographers.

From Rás Bernos, or Cape Nose, the coast, which is bold and safe to approach, extends to the westward thirteen miles, at which termination it takes an abrupt turn to the southward. The elbow thus formed assumes the shape of a small bay, which is partially

protected from the southward by a low, sandy, and somewhat bushy point. From the southern extreme of this point, the ruins, forming sandy mounds, some of which are covered with bushes, may be clearly distinguished, bearing west-south-west, at a distance of two miles and a half. The landing-place will be recognised by two hillocks about thirty feet in height, which rise close to the sea at the termination of a low conspicuous point of dark-coloured rocks.

From this point, which forms its southern extreme, a lagoon that seems formerly to have served the purpose of an inner harbour, though its entrance is now choked with sand, extends for some space inland; and on its northern shore, at the distance of half a mile, stand the ruins of the town. On the highest part, near the centre of these hillocks, the walls and upper portion of a small but massive Egyptian temple are left uncovered. If we except this edifice, which is in a very dilapidated state, and nearly buried in sand, there are now no vestiges worthy the attention of a traveller; but the chambers and buildings which we did not examine, judging

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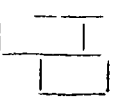
from the result of our labours here, may conceal many valuable fragments of sculpture, hieroglyphics, &c., which would amply repay the trouble of excavating them.

The mounds occupy a space about a mile in circumference, of which, as I have before noticed, the temple is the centre; from this centre the houses branch off in narrow streets, mostly at right angles with each other. Two lines of hillocks, more widely separated, extending in a line from the temple towards the sea, denote a street of larger size to have run in that direction. The houses surrounding the temple may amount in number to 1000 or 1500, but there are several clusters detached from the city: they appear all to have been built of the soft madrepore, still used in the construction of the houses of Kosaïr and other towns on the shores of the Red Sea. We were enabled to trace by the walls (which were the only parts uncovered) the form and size of these habitations; they mostly consisted of three rooms, which were disposed in this form  . They are smaller than the generality of houses at present ex-

isting in any part of the Red Sea coast excepting Yembo', which is completely an Arab town. The surface of all the mounds is strewn with glass of various colours, and broken pottery. By removing the sand for a small depth, lumps of corroded brass were discovered in great quantities; some coins, the inscriptions on which were illegible, and a key, tolerably perfect in its form, were also obtained; but we were not successful in finding amidst the neighbouring ruins any articles of more importance.

The entrance of the temple faces the eastward. The limited period of our stay obliged us to confine our labours to a single chamber, which appeared to have been previously partially excavated. Had we remained longer, we should probably have succeeded in clearing the whole building. After removing the sand to the depth of four or five feet, we discovered several figures, and, as we proceeded, it was ascertained that they were continued at the same level in groups round the chamber. We also found two fragments, bearing Greek inscriptions, and the broken pieces of a statue, with its pedestal. Several massive stones,

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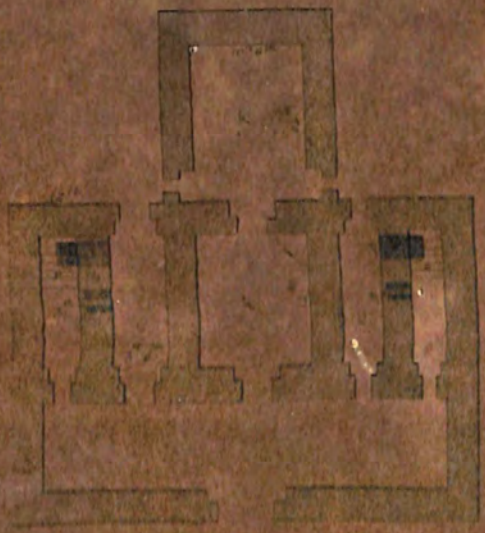


which had formed the roof, we next dislodged. The hieroglyphics on these were in a beautiful state of preservation. The only part of these yet deciphered is a character which Champollion* translates "statue colossal," and found in the dedicatory inscriptions on those gigantic statues at Luxor. The Greek tablet, of which unfortunately a considerable portion is wanting, bears the following inscription:

ΥΠΕΡΒΑΣΙΛΕ.....
ΚΑΙΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗ .....
ΤΗΣΑΔΕΛΦ .....
ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤ .....
ΘΕΟ .....
ΤΕ .....
By King † † † † † †
And Queen † † † † †
Cleopatra † † † † † †
His Sister † † † †
† † God † † † †
† † † †

which is apparently a dedicatory inscription by a King of Egypt, who had for Queen a Cleopatra, his own sister. This was the case with Ptolemy Evergetes, Ptolemy Laertes, and Ptolemy Dionysius, husband of the re-

* No. 299 of his Tableau Générale.

nowned Cleopatra, whose beauty enslaved Marc Anthony; so that it is difficult to determine the exact date of the inscription. Finding it, however, in juxtaposition with the fragment of a hieroglyphic tablet, mentioning a colossal statue, it is not improbable that both tablets had reference to the statue of the god to whom the temple was dedicated by one of the above monarchs. Had our stay been more lengthened, I should have completed the excavation of this temple, as well as of several private houses. Our labours might possibly have been rewarded by the discovery of some ancient monument, which, like the famed Rosetta stone, would have contributed to throw additional light on the mist-enveloped literature of ancient Egypt.

The hope of finding the remaining portions of the Greek tablets induced us to persevere in our researches until we had entirely excavated the chamber, but we were not successful. The walls are covered with hieroglyphics, but the soft limestone with which they had been constructed has yielded to the effects of time; and the figures, with the exception of those given in the plan, are much defaced, and

could be removed by merely passing the hand over them.

South-west from the ruins, and nearer the beach, there are several mounds of rubbish, covered with strong bushes; which are invariably found in the vicinity of old Egyptian towns.

It is somewhat singular, though we minutely examined the locality, that we were unable to discover any traces of either tanks or wells; nor was our search after the places of sepulture more successful.

On a first view, neither the size of the temple, nor the extent of the ruins, are such as would seem to mark the remains of a town once the emporium of the trade between India, Egypt, and Europe: yet, if we reflect that it was two hundred and seventy miles from the Nile, and that it was consequently far removed from any cultivated tract whence supplies might readily be procured, there are no reasons to suppose many inhabitants would reside there from choice, or that its size should exceed that of such a city as these ruins indicate; and I think the evidence which our observations here have enabled us to fur-

nish, in proof of this being the Berenice Trogloditica of Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pliny, will be admitted as conclusive. I shall subjoin the following extracts from Robertson's "Historical Disquisition concerning Ancient India:"—"From the slow and dangerous navigation towards the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the Canal was found to be of so little use, that in order to facilitate the communication with India, he built a city on the west coast of that sea, almost under the tropic, to which he gave the name of Berenice. This new city became the staple of trade with India. From Berenice the goods were transported to Koptos, a city three miles distant from the Nile, but which had a communication with the river by a navigable canal, of which there are still some remains, and then were carried down the stream to Alexandria. The distance between Berenice and Koptos was, according to Pliny, two hundred and fifty-eight Roman miles, and the road lay through the Desert of Thebais, almost entirely destitute of water.

"It is singular that P. Sicard ('Mem. des Missions dans le Levant,' tom. ii. p. 159), and

some other respectable writers, should suppose Kosaïr to be the Berenice founded by Ptolemy, although Ptolemy has laid down its latitude at 23° 50′ north, and Strabo has described it as nearly under the same parallel with that of Syene (lib. iii. p. 195 D). In consequence of this mistake, Pliny's computation of the distance between Berenice and Koptos, at two hundred and fifty-eight miles, has been deemed erroneous (Pocock, p. 87). But as Pliny not only mentions the total distance, but names the different stations in the journey, and specifies the number of miles between each, and as the Itinerary of Antoninus coincides exactly with his accounts (D'Anville, Egypt, p. 21), there is no reason to call in question its accuracy *."

* In describing the route of commerce between India and Egypt by way of the Red Sea, Pliny observes that they left the Nile at Koptos, and made towards Berenice by a camel track across the Desert; the distance being two hundred and fifty-eight Roman miles. The first wells occurred at the distance of thirty-two miles from Koptos; the second in a mountain about a day's journey further on; the third at the distance of ninety-five miles from Koptos. A fourth watering-place in the mountains is mentioned, but without distances. Then followed the Hydrium of Apollo, at the distance of one hundred and eighty-four miles from Koptos, to this succeeds another in the mountains; and then the new Hydrium, two hundred and thirty-three miles from Koptos, where the Romans had a garrison of two thousand men. The next station was Berenice itself. Of this journey, the greater part was

We made the latitude 23° 55′ north, differing but five miles from that given by Ptolemy.

To those acquainted with the loose manner in which the latitudes were observed by the ancients, this close approximation may afford matter of surprise; but Berenice, like Syene, is just under the tropic, and their anxiety to trace the extent of the Sun's journey to the southward may have induced them to make here, as there, very accurate observations.

Strabo describes the position of Berenice with much correctness: he says it is situated at the extremity of a bay, which, on account of its numerous rocks and shoals, was called Secunundus. It is singular, that, in "Foul Bay," this portion of the Red Sea should for so many ages have retained its name.

It may be considered fortunate that we should have succeeded in identifying this port, few of the other stations on this coast, known to the ancients, are now ascertained.

Referring to the motives assigned by

performed by night, on account of the heat, and the whole took up twelve days; which shows, that in antiquity, a caravan made but about twenty-one and a half miles a day. The fleets left Berenice about midsummer, if possible, before the rising of the dog-star, or immediately after.

Robertson for Ptolemy Philadelphus having fixed upon this spot in preference to others nearer the Nile, it is natural to suppose that the monarch, desirous of gaining the object of shortening the passage in its fullest effect, would have selected a port as far to the southward as possible, (in order to avoid the strong northerly winds which prevail nine months in the year,) but which should yet be within the limits of his dominions.

To these advantages which Berenice enjoys may also be added a capacious and well-sheltered harbour, which no other locality on this coast, from latitude 23° to 24°, possesses.

The circumstance of our finding the Greek tablet must also be admitted as a strong proof (if more is required to establish the identity of these ruins with the ancient Berenice), since we are not informed that the Greeks had other towns on the coast near this spot.

From Berenice the shore continues low, rocky, and intersected with several lagoons, having their entrances blocked up with sand. About seven miles from the beach there is a narrow range of mountains, the elevation of which we ascertained to be four thousand two hundred feet. A plain of drift sand extends

from their base to the sea, and they are broken into many varieties of shape, mostly terminating in sharp and rugged points. To one of the most elevated, which was so narrow that it bore some resemblance to a column, we were induced to apply the appellation of "Berenice's Bodkin." Its remarkable appearance will cause it to be easily recognised by the mariner. There are no uplands in their vicinity equal in height, or similar in appearance to this range.

Our next station was at a small opening in the reef, with Berenice's Bodkin bearing west. It is not discernible until approached very near, though leading into an extensive channel, formed by two reefs running parallel to the shore. The beach is thickly clothed in several places by tall mangrove trees*, which, being visible from a considerable distance, form an excellent mark for approaching the anchorage. Many of these, which, from some unknown cause, were stripped of their leaves and dried up by the sun's heat, would afford an abundant supply of excellent fire-wood From the loose and sandy nature of the soil

* *Rizophora.* Manglé.

the largest and best adapted for this purpose, may be dislodged with the utmost facility, and considerable quantities are found, requiring no other preparation for immediate use, than being sawn into the requisite length. Might not steamers in want of coal find a useful substitute, by sending their boats in here?

We saw no inhabitants on this part of the coast, but a few wretched huts, and numerous tracks of men and camels indicated that it is frequently visited by the natives, who probably come here in search of wood for fuel, and other purposes. We examined it with great care, in order to ascertain the correct position of the port of Habesh, which Mr. Horsburgh places at the extremity of the bay in 23 20′; but between the parallels of 23° and 24°, there is no opening in the reef which girds the coast, of greater width than would admit a small bágalá; nor is there in the whole extent of the bay, if we except Berenice and Hilaïb, any harbour of sufficient capacity to accommodate a ship. It is therefore necessary to state that the information on which that able and justly celebrated hydrographer was induced to note

its existence near this spot, is incorrect. It probably owes its foundation in a tale collected by some navigator from the Arab pilots, who are fond of magnifying the most contracted and inconvenient inlets into capacious and extensive anchorages. In the course of our survey we were frequently endangered by this idle propensity.

We next proceeded to a low sandy islet, called Síhal by the pilots *. On its western extremity there are several miserable huts occupied by some fishermen of the Huteïmí tribe, who, with their families, reside here for several months in the year. Like the generality of the same tribe, their food mostly consists of fish, which is varied occasionally by grain purchased at Jiddah and Yembo' by the sale of pearls. Their boats are small, and of the rudest construction, yet they encounter the most tempestuous weather in them. We were shown the skin and teeth of a young seal, which are said to be numerous here, and are usually caught entangled on the upper part of the reef. In

* Síhal signifies Male Acacia, of which there are a few on the island.

order to discern them when in this situation, a man is usually stationed at the mast-head, with his feet supported by a piece of wood secured between two ropes, that answer as shrouds. A species, called by the seamen devil-fish, and turtle, are likewise discovered in a similar manner. The latter (which an expert diver will catch even when the animal is aware of his approach) is usually secured by casting a noose over his head, the fisherman approaching from behind, and holding him by one of the side fins while he is placing the rope. I was once heartily amused at being present at the capture of a devil-fish. A couple being perceived on a calm day swimming round the vessel, one of our small boats was immediately lowered, and a harpoon, fixed on a staff six feet in length, with several fathom of rope attached to it, was placed in her; this, our fisherman, an African slave, well accustomed to the sport, grasped in his hand, holding the harpoon near the water, as he stood immoveable in the bow of the boat. Our prey allowed us to approach so close, that we placed the boat over the spot where they were swim-

ming, at the depth of three or four feet, and then the slave sprung out, directing the point of his weapon downwards, and putting his whole weight to it, to add force to the blow. He pierced him nearly through and through; then recovering himself as quickly as possible, he scrambled into the boat, while the wounded fish, after making two or three circuits, darted off in a straight direction, and at a great rate. We had nothing to do in the boat but to watch his course and manage the helm accordingly; so that after a quarter of an hour's chase, he became thoroughly exhausted, and we conveyed him alongside. Its form was nearly circular, and measured at the widest part seven feet. The skin is considered valuable, and an oil of excellent quality is said to be drawn from their livers.

From Síhal we obtained a fisherman as pilot; he possessed, however, but a scanty knowledge of the coast.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mersa Shab—Bicharí Arabs—Costumes—Arms—Fondness for Tobacco—Jebel Elba—Mountaineers—Working Silver Mines—Anchorages—Sherm Hilaïb—Wells—Pasturage—Character of the Natives—Burial places—Arab Jealousy—Mersa Marúb—Ruined Buildings—Pilgrims' Tombs—Sherm 'Abú Mishmish—Conclusion of Northern Survey—Foul Bay Coast Line.

At Mersa Shab, during low water, we lay aground about one hundred and fifty yards from the entrance, across which a heavy swell was setting; but the interior has smooth water and is completely sheltered south of the anchorage: connected with it by a contracted shallow channel, there is a lagoon of considerable extent, which is overrun in many places with mangrove bushes. The neighbouring country exhibits a desert and barren surface, covered near the sea with saline incrustations, blistered by the heat of the sun. We saw here several natives, belonging to the Bicharí Arabs, who, though their complexion was quite as black as that

of the natives of the interior of Africa, had neither the disagreeable contour, thick lips, flattened nose, nor woolly hair, peculiar to that race. Their features, on the contrary, were soft and pleasing, and resembled what we may imagine to belong to an intermediate race between the Abyssinian and Bedowin Arab: in stature they were generally above the middle height, and their limbs, though well proportioned, did not appear remarkable for strength. Their hair was plaited and frizzled out with ringlets which descended from a large mass on the crown of the head. Through the centre of this knot was thrust a circular piece of hard wood, about eight inches in length, resembling a skewer, which appeared from the use we saw made of it, to answer as a comb. The few females we observed here tending sheep, were not distinguished by a prepossessing appearance. Their dress and ornaments consisted of bracelets of glass-stones, and shells, strung round their wrists; a tanned hide worn round the middle, and a loose wrapper thrown over the shoulder, whilst their faces were uncovered. The men wore a piece of cloth encircling their

loins, and a large cloak or kamolin, which also served to cover them at night. Their disposition appeared mild and inoffensive and they were for the most part unarmed; few only having small, crooked knives, or daggers, from their appearance, better fitted for culinary, than warlike purposes. We procured several sheep in exchange for rice and tobacco, commodities in great request with them: the latter they called Tombac, the name applied to it throughout the East. Their pipe-bowls were made from a species of hard, black stone, used without a stick: those who did not possess the luxury of a pipe-bowl were content to inhale the fumes through a hollow cane about five inches in length. To the taste of wine or spirituous liquors they appeared utter strangers, firmly rejecting such as were offered them. Butter, bread, and vegetables were either quite unknown, or not procurable; and, as they do not possess boats of any description, their support chiefly depends on the fish and shell-fish which they pick up along shore, aided by an occasional supply of grain procured by the sale of their flocks on the banks of the Nile. They all professed to be Mussulmans, though they

were either but very partially acquainted with the doctrines of the Koran, or else observed them but loosely.

Leaving the Berenice range to the southward, there is nothing in a low rocky coast peculiar or striking, until we approach the mountainous masses known to the Arabs by the name of Jebel Olba; several observations enabled us to fix the summit of the highest at eight thousand feet; and their peaks are seldom free of clouds. This great elevation would render them sufficiently distinguishable without further remark, especially as there are no hills of equal elevation near them.

From a note in Burckhardt, which I remembered having perused while in India, I was induced to make particular inquiries of the Bedowins respecting some excavations which that traveller was several times informed, both in Syria and Egypt, existed on the sea-shore near this mountain. The only excavations they appear to possess any knowledge of, and which are without doubt those in question, are the shafts of some silver mines near the summit of this mountain. These were worked to a considerable extent

many centuries ago; and some notices of them being preserved by the Arabian authors, the facts were communicated to Mohammed 'Alí, who, in 1832, despatched a party to examine and report on them.

The inhabitants of the mountain are described as a fierce and peculiarly intolerant race; but the Pasha's name served as a secure passport, and after considerable difficulty and danger in ascending the steep and slippery sides of the mountain, Monsieur Linon, who commanded the expedition, with his companions, reached the spot. His opinion, as communicated to me by one of the party, was, that the mines might be worked to advantage, provided water could be procured in their vicinity; but after much diligent search and inquiry, they were unable to find any, though some traces of the troughs in which the ore had formerly been washed, still existed.

From Mersa Shab to Sherm Hileïb, there are no anchorages, and we could not in consequence approach the shore; added to which, the weather was tempestuous in the extreme, and scarcely a day elapsed without the safety

of the vessel being considerably endangered, amidst the numerous rocks and shoals that surrounded us. By night we were generally secured to the lee side of a reef, trusting to good fortune for no change in the almost unvarying northerly breezes.

The interior of Sherm Hileïb is not likely to prove of service to shipping, as the entrance runs to the northward, and is very confined; it would, in a north-wester, be therefore difficult to reach the anchorage. Bagalás from the Arabian coast occasionally visit Hileïb to procure camels, sheep, horsé-hair, &c., but the extreme dread the Arab mariner entertains of crossing the sea prevents any general communication between the two coasts. Since the Nubians here are either indifferent to, or ignorant of the value of money, and are content to receive a scanty supply of grain, tobacco, and trinkets, in exchange for what they furnish, the few hardy enough to dare the passage are amply repaid by the profits they obtain.

At a short distance from the beach on the south-west side of the bay, in the bed of a torrent, entirely dry at the period of our visit,

were numerous wells, two or three feet deep, affording an abundant supply of excellent water. We found in their vicinity several reservoirs constructed of earth baked by the sun, from two to four feet in height, of a circular form, and hollowed at the upper part for the reception of the water, with which their cattle and camels were supplied. Numerous flocks of sheep and goats, that fed on the short grass with which the surrounding country was covered, had assembled about these water troughs. Shortly after we anchored, a native made his appearance from behind a hillock, and our interpreter and pilot were sent to explain the object of our visit. On receiving a few trifling presents, he went to a short distance, and returned with several companions who had hidden themselves on our approach. After their first impression of alarm and astonishment at the sight of Europeans had subsided, a friendly intercourse was speedily established. To money, as I have already noticed, they appeared indifferent; but grain and tobacco, especially the latter, were eagerly demanded. Their shyness at the approach of strangers

is the less remarkable, since the Arabs from the opposite coast were formerly in the habit of landing whenever an opportunity offered itself, and carrying off their flocks. In some instances they did not scruple to include the inhabitants, who were subsequently disposed of in the market at Jiddah as slaves. All that has hitherto been published concerning this part of the coast from the reports of travellers, none of whom, however, have visited it, represents the neighbouring tribes as fierce and treacherous. As far as our slight intercourse enables me to judge, I should conclude them to be decidedly the reverse in both respects; for while wandering alone at the distance of several miles from the beach, I have frequently fallen in with parties of strangers, whose behaviour was invariably kind and attentive; had it been otherwise, it must be recollected we had no means of punishing them; for their nearest dwelling-places were distant ten or twelve miles, and those on the sea-shore could have decamped with their flocks at a moment's notice.

I observed their burial places to be on the summit of moderately-elevated hills, sur-

rounded by an outer and inner circle of stones, with two of a larger kind at the head and feet; the former is hollowed at the upper part to the depth of eight or ten inches; but they were entirely destitute of inscriptions or ornaments of any kind.

There is a village called Rásaï, distant ten miles from the anchorage, but neither persuasion nor offers of reward, would induce them to conduct us there, probably from jealousy of their females. The dromedaries we saw here, both as regards fleetness and appearance, were infinitely superior to those on the Arabian side, where these animals are much prized. In a race we got up between half a dozen of them, several broke out into a gallop, and it required the utmost exertions of the riders to stop them.

From Hileïb we proceeded to Mersa Marúb, which is not more than ninety yards in width at the entrance, and consequently inaccessible to all but boats. The nature of the service on which we were employed, obliged us to have recourse to these anchorages: shortly after our arrival, a singular building was observed from the ship, and I landed for the pur-

pose of examining it. After four hours' walk across an arid, stony country, it proved to be a regular octagonal building, apparently of great age; the sides were six feet in thickness, and well constructed of hewn coral and sandstone; their height was sixteen feet, and at the angles, they were elevated about two feet, gradually sloping down towards the intermediate space. The roof was flat, and similar in construction to the ground plan of the building, but so placed, that its angles intersected those formed by the walls, and surmounted by a dome that had formerly been covered with cement. On each of the four sides of the building there was originally a small gothic arched window, facing the cardinal points; but that over the door on the eastern side has been filled up. In the interior, we observed a plain tomb, without ornament or inscription. Several graves were scattered around, all having the double circle of stones which I have already noticed.

At a few yards distance, there are traces of a camel route, so that I have little doubt this monument covers the remains of some pilgrims of distinction, who died when pro-

ceeding by it to Cairo. The earliest Arabian authors notice this road, and I heard it is at present in use.

Sherm 'Abú Mismish, our next station, concluded the survey of the northern part of the Red Sea. From Cape Calmez to Rás Bernas, the coast line forms an indenture which has not unaptly been termed "Foul Bay." So little inducement exists within these points for approaching its barren and rocky shores, that we were unable at Jiddah or Kosaïr to procure a pilot who possessed any knowledge of them. The conclusion of an arduous and dangerous survey has enabled me to pronounce, that within the boundary traced in the chart, the space is filled with such a labyrinth of shoals and reefs, that our knowledge of them can serve no other purpose than to warn vessels from invading its limits. The coast line in the old charts is very incorrectly delineated, and approaches generally about half a degree too far to the westward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Causes which led to the discovery of Berbera—Description—A Súmali — Houses — Arms — Population—Trade—Markets —Produce—Coffee — Bazár—Water—Banians—Character of the natives of Berbera — Dress — Description of a Battle—National Councils—War Songs—Robbers—Converts to Mohammedanism—Tomb—Commercial intercourse with Abyssinia.

THE harbour and mart of Berbera is situated on the western or African side, just without the straits of Babelmandeb.

Though occasionally visited by small vessels from America, India, and the Isle of France, it remained almost unknown to Europeans until 1826, when the Bombay Government having received intelligence that a brig from the Mauritius had been seized there, and part of her crew barbarously murdered, despatched an expedition against it. The English squadron fully brought about the object for which it had been sent; yet beyond this little occurred worthy of narration. Directly

the fire was opened from the ships the natives fled with their wives and families; and a party of seamen being landed, they took quiet possession of it. Through the intervention of Shúmákí, one of their chiefs by whose spirited and humane exertions the survivors from the brig were solely indebted for their preservation, many of the fugitives returned on the following day, and an agreement was entered into, by which they bound themselves to refrain from any future attack on English vessels; and also to refund, by annual instalments, the full amount of the plundered property. For the purpose of collecting, and, if necessary, enforcing the stipulated demand, it was resolved that a vessel of war should be despatched annually, until the whole was liquidated; and during one of these visits, much of the information collected in the following notes was obtained. Berbera may be described as a large encampment, rather than a town; for there are no brick houses; the residents, as well as the visiters, with the trifling exception of those lodged in cadjan huts, dwelling in tents constructed of a few sticks, and covered with skins. These the

Súmális bring with them; and though not more than eight or ten feet square, they frequently contain a family consisting of the husband, five or six of his women, their children, and two or three attendant slaves. In the pitching these tents, no attention is paid to position, they being in some places thickly clustered together, and in others detached and straggling. The space they occupy not being walled, is consequently open to the incursions of numerous robbers, that are constantly hovering near the skirts of the town. Some skins serving as bedding, a few earthen cooking pots, a stone for grinding corn, and a wooden bowl for holding water complete their furniture. Along the walls are placed their arms, consisting of bows, arrows, and spears. With the exception of a few chiefs, who may possess a solitary and much-prized matchlock or pistol, they have no fire-arms. A few poisoned arrows were shown, but their use among the inhabitants dwelling on the sea-coast appears to be by no means so general as they are in the interior, where almost every engagement is contested with them. The form of their bow varies much; it is a well-

formed elastic weapon, which they manage with considerable adroitness. Their spears, usually eight or ten feet in length, are adapted for both thrusting and throwing, as the distance between the combatants will admit. They also cut and hack with the edge of the blade; each individual carries two, three, and sometimes more.

The permanent residents are very few, not exceeding, during the warm months, a dozen families; but from the month of September to that of April in the following year, during which time an annual fair or mart is held, the influx of Súmális and other visiters swells the amount from seven to sometimes ten thousand souls; but the number and character of these is constantly changing, for the first caravans remain no longer than until they have disposed of their merchandise, and others from various quarters successively arrive and depart throughout the season.

The object of these Africans in thus resorting in such multitudes to the mart at Berbera, is to barter the various articles produced in the interior, for others which are brought from

Arabia. To effect this exchange, boats are continually arriving and departing from and for Mokhá, Hodeïdha, Makullah, and other ports. The number usually assembled was from thirty to forty, and allowing an average of a daily arrival and departure, rather under than over the mark, it gives a total, during the season, of two hundred and fifty boats of from forty to a hundred tons, or about fifteen thousand tons annually. Exclusive of this, two or three square-rigged vessels arrive during the season; and hence, a fair estimate may be formed of the value and extent of the commerce of this port. Notwithstanding a heavy swell and constant shore-breezes, the Arab boats appear to have little difficulty in passing and repassing to and from the opposite coast. The principal articles which the Súmális bring with them from the interior are ghí and coffee, together with sheep, gums of various kinds, myrrh, ostrich feathers, small quantities of gold dust, hides tanned with and without the hair, and, towards the close of the season, slaves of both sexes. The use of ghí with rice and other articles of food, is univer-

sal in Arabia; the northern provinces being supplied from Egypt; but Jiddah, Mecca, many provinces in the interior, and almost all Yemen, receive theirs from the African ports. Being made from goat, sheep, and cow's milk, they esteem the ghí of the latter country to be far preferable to that procured from Egypt, which is made from the milk of buffaloes*. It is brought over in large leathern skins, similar to those used in India. A considerable quantity of indigo is forwarded from hence to Mokhá and Makullah, where blue cloth seems in more general use than at Jiddah, or any of the northern provinces. Owing, probably, to its composing the dress of the Fellahs of Egypt, for whom the Arabs entertain great contempt, it is there seldom worn by any but the lower classes. A great supply of indigo was some years ago annually demanded from India, Abyssinia, and Yemen; but the improvements Mahommed Alí has since made in the growth and manufacture of that reared in Egypt, put an end to the

* In this and other parts of the work I have retained the Indian name of this substance (which is clarified butter), in preference to the Arabian local term, semín, as throughout the coast it is more generally understood than the latter.

importation from these quarters. Slaves here are valued at from thirty to fifty dollars; very few have their teeth filed to a point, as is customary with captives brought from Zanzibar.

From the best information I have been enabled to obtain, it appears that the coffee is brought from about forty days' journey in the interior. As it forms the principal part of the return cargo of boats and vessels visiting the port, the quantity furnished must be very great. I believe it is not generally known in Europe that any part of Africa produces coffee; yet the Arabs have preserved a tradition that the plant is a native of Abyssinia, and was first brought from thence to their own country. Though frequent inquiries have been made by travellers who have visited Africa, yet, as far as I can recollect, no mention occurs in their works of its growth or appearance. The part from whence the Berbera merchants receive their supply is described as an elevated and hilly district, moistened by frequent rains, and abounding in large trees, under the shade of which the coffee is reared.

A bazár or market is held occasionally

within the encampment, but this occurs but seldom, as the respective caravans either bring with them a sufficiency of provisions to subsist on during their stay, or purchase them by wholesale from the boats on their arrival. No vegetables or fruits of any description were ever observed to be exhibited for sale. The encampment is supplied with indifferent water from some wells about two miles and a half distant in the interior; but water of a superior quality is brought from a village six miles to the southward, and the boats not unfrequently fill up at the torrents caused by heavy rains on the adjacent hills, and which here flow into the sea. I regret that my information does not permit me to state the prices paid for the different articles, nor can I specify the exact amount of the profit obtained; but frequent inquiry induces me to fix the latter at from one hundred to one hundred and fifty per cent., on their arrival on the Arabian coast, clear of all charges and expense; an enormous gain, which, in many seasons, I am credibly informed, rather exceeds than falls short of this statement. When our cruiser lay there, the sum collected

from each boat was little less than from thirty to fifty dollars, yet it did not influence their visits, as was evident from the fact that many vessels accomplished a third voyage, between Berbera and Mokhá the same season.

The Banians of Mokhá, Hodeïdha, &c., have each a partner residing here, to whom the various articles are consigned, and in their hands is the whole of the trade of the port. Between Basrah in the Persian Gulf and Hodeïdha in the Red Sea, almost every town on the coast of Arabia contains several families of this wily race, who confine themselves exclusively to commercial pursuits, their first object in all cases being to throw a veil of mystery over their proceedings, and to exclude other classes by every means in their power from any participation in their gains. Detested and despised as they are by the Arabs, they have nevertheless, by their natural shrewdness and address, been able, in most instances, to effect their purpose; and at Bahreïn, Maskat, and other ports, they monopolise the whole of the pearl fishery, amounting, it is supposed, to thirty or forty lacs of rupees annually. At Berbera, in a

similar manner, they have enjoyed silently and unnoticed the enormous profits of its trade during several years. In exchange for the various commodities furnished by Africa, the Banians supply iron, lead, cotton cloth, rice, and Dhurrah *, so that all commercial transactions between the two parties are confined to barter; money during these bargains being never required or thought of. Among the Súmálís, with the exception of some of their chiefs, few appear to possess a single dollar, the coin most current in Africa; nevertheless, the eagerness they evinced to part with even their arms, their most valuable possessions, in exchange for some of these coins, showed them by no means insensible to their value. Whenever reproached with their treacherous conduct towards the English brig, they appeared anxious to rid themselves of the odium of that transaction, and in many instances did not scruple to charge the Banians with having instigated them to the act. Certain it is, the plot could never have been organized, or carried into execution, without their privacy; and since they furnished no

* *Sorghum vulgare*.

information by which it might be repelled or prevented, there is every reason to believe their sanction was not wanting.

To the officers of the Elphinstone the Súmálís appeared a frank, bold, and generous race. At a time when, in consequence of their unwillingness or inability to pay the sum required, their supply of provisions was cut off, and a total stop put to their trade, by the blockade of their port, the officers occasionally fell in with parties of twenty or thirty, at a distance of two or three miles from the beach. It was merely necessary to approach them, and they appeared quite pleased with such a mark of confidence. If any danger from a marauding party was to be apprehended, information by which it might be avoided was readily and frankly given; their conversation and manner being no way indicative of the ill feeling which, considering the relative situation of the two parties, may have been anticipated. The dress of the men consists of merely a single piece of white cloth wound round their waist, one end of which, after being carried across the breast, is thrown negligently over the shoulder. In addition to a cloth of this kind, of smaller dimensions,

the women wear a piece of tanned hide round their waist; to which is added a smaller apron of the same material, suspended by loops over the shoulder to conceal their breasts. The hair of the men is frizzled into large ringlets, several of which hang on either side of the face. The hair left in the middle is also frizzled and raised by the same means, the whole being anointed with large quantities of mutton fat. Through the upper part they thrust a straight piece of wood, resembling in form and size a skewer, which serves the double purpose of a comb, and also as an instrument for adjusting their curls *.

During the Elphinstone's stay at Berbera, skirmishes among the various tribes assembled were very frequent, though commonly originating from trifling causes: thus, a man detected in purloining a camel or sheep from another horde, was not unfrequently wounded in the attempt; and this was sufficient to prompt both sides to take up the quarrel. These battles usually took place outside the town; when the respective combatants traversed in

* Some further notice of this singular race will be given hereafter. I have met them frequently at Mokhâ and Macullah.

circuits, alternately attacking and retreating, until one side was defeated and driven into the town, when hostilities ceased. A detachment pursued by their adversaries was occasionally seen to take the water, where they frequently fought with much obstinacy up to their middles. After these encounters, several boat loads of wounded were brought alongside for surgical assistance. They were usually cut and gashed in a most terrific manner, and bore the necessary operations and dressings with astonishing firmness; not a sigh or groan escaping them. At the commencement, the women were observed mingled in the fray, throwing dust among the combatants, and beating them with boughs. They carry off the dead and wounded as they fall; washing, and then burying the bodies in the sand immediately, without any funeral ceremony.

When they meditate an attack on an hostile tribe, or contemplate any other measure of importance, a meeting of the various chiefs is called. These, attended by large bodies of their followers, form a circle, where all are seated with their chins resting on their knees, holding in their hands their spears, with the

sharp end fixed in the ground. All being thus arranged, an individual, usually the oldest of the party, rises to address the assembly; the most profound silence and attention is observed until he concludes, when a low murmur of applause alone indicates that his counsel is approved of. The orator then sits down, and another rises, until all have spoken who are desirous of doing so. In this sedate and quiet manner are their resolutions formed; the council usually breaking up at the expiration of one or two hours' debate. In the plain beyond the town, it was by no means unusual to observe five or six of these assemblies deliberating at the same period, but a few yards removed from each other. When hostilities had been determined on, the Súmálís were observed during the calm moonlight nights, and generally on the one preceding their departure, to collect in parties of two or three hundred, for the purpose of chanting their war song, which they did to a wild and plaintive air. The words were first sung by a single individual, and then repeated in chorus by all present. It would have been impossible for the nicest

ear to detect any irregularity in their voices, or in the tune, and the effect, as it came over the waters mellowed by distance, is described to have been peculiarly romantic and pleasing.

These battles and disturbances become the more frequent among the Súmálís at Berbera, from the absence of any general or superior authority; every tribe obeying the dictates of their own will and judgment; but at a town called Hurra, at a distance of eight days' journey from the coast, where the Sultan of all the tribes resides, there is said to be a regular government, and the people are described as being more peaceable and civilised. They reside in large houses construced of stone, and cultivate numerous plantations and gardens.

During the fair, the Súmálís are much annoyed by hordes of robbers, who continually hover round the town, only waiting an opportunity to dash into it. Little information could be gleaned respecting these robbers, though their number is supposed to amount to twenty or thirty thousand fighting men. They are at war with all the surround-

ing tribes, have no towns or fixed places of abode; and in this and other respects, appear in habits and character to resemble the Bedowin Arabs. Their audacity is so great, that caravans are frequently plundered not two hours' journey from Berbera, and it was a common event for them to carry off the camels left to graze near the town. Immediately their approach was discovered, all the male inhabitants sallied out against them, but mounted on fleet horses or camels, if unsuccessful in carrying off their plunder, they almost invariably managed to reach their fastnesses amidst the hills in safety.

Shumáki, the chief already spoken of, was very anxious that some officers of the vessel should visit the Sultan at Hurra; who, he was convinced, would be delighted to receive and entertain them. As Shumáki himself offered to remain as a hostage, and also to furnish a sufficient guard, it is much to be regretted such an opportunity of acquiring information should have been lost; but circumstances, it is imagined, prevented the commander from sanctioning the requests of the officers who were desirous of availing themselves of it. Notwithstanding the general

diffusion of the Mussulman religion throughout the greater part of Africa, it is somewhat strange that it has found so few converts on the sea-coast, where the natives are in constant communication with those of that persuasion. Not more than a third of those assembled at Berbera were Mussulmans, the rest being idolaters and Christians. I have been unable to discover the peculiar tenets and ceremonies of the first, but have met the latter occasionally on their way to Jerusalem. In these countries, a pilgrim who has visited that city enjoys with his own sect the same degree of respect and sanctity which a Hají acquires with Mohammedans from his sojourn at Mecca. Those I saw were generally poor men, for their chiefs rarely undertake these pilgrimages. They go up by sea as far as Suez, where they disembark, and perform the rest of the journey on foot; a task in which six or eight months are usually consumed.

They have no mosques in Berbera, but at the distance of half a mile, there is a small rude tomb which the idolatrous Súmálís occasionally visit. Here they make votive offerings of ostriches' eggs, which are sus-

pended to the ceiling; and as these become broken, they are replaced by others.

The above notes are so meagre in their detail, that I should not have ventured to submit them, had it not occurred to me, that by laying open in part the hitherto unknown sources and extent of the commerce of Berbera, the attention of some future visitant to the Red Sea may be drawn towards the subject. For this purpose I had long been most anxious to visit this port, and make myself acquainted by personal inquiry with the subject here touched on; but as our duties limited our survey to the northern portion of the sea, I have been obliged to avail myself of a few notes obtained from an officer of the Elphinstone, in addition to some oral information contributed from various other quarters. I cannot flatter myself that in all instances they are correct, but by constant and reiterated inquiries, I have endeavoured to make them as nearly so as their nature and my opportunities would admit.

The attention of the supreme government in India has on several occasions been directed towards the opening of a commercial communication and intercourse with the in-

terior of Abyssinia. This was the ostensible object of Lord Valentia's visit to the Red Sea in 1800, but his lordship failed to effect his purpose, from causes that it would be both tedious and unnecessary to detail here. I may, however, just mention that Mr. Salt, his lordship's secretary, having been furnished with letters and presents for the Abyssinian monarch, deemed it, in consequence of the unsettled state of the country, not advisable to proceed beyond Antalow, where he concluded an agreement with its Rais, who appeared desirous of forwarding the mission, that a port called Benî, about four days' journey from Antalow, should be selected as the entrepôt for receiving and exporting the merchandise; but nothing beyond this appears to have been arranged. A second mission from England, conducted also by Mr. Salt, from similar causes met with no better success. In 1833, the country was, if possible, in a more disturbed and convulsed state than before.

Prior to opening an extensive and general intercourse with the interior of Abyssinia, the sanction and co-operation of the king and principal chiefs would doubtless be ne-

cessary; but if any hopes are indulged that the principal obstructions to such a scheme would be removed by these means, they are ill grounded and fallacious: for in a country like Abyssinia, which is merely a collection of petty states and provinces, continually at war with each other, and acknowledging, in most instances, no general authority, there exists a difficulty both in establishing a new channel of communication, or any well arranged system to apply to it, which under existing circumstances could never be surmounted. But on the sea-coast of Berbera there is nothing to prevent us from availing ourselves of the same channel (though of course liable to occasional interruptions) as that through which other ports for centuries have been supplied. As Mohammed 'Alí lays claim to that part of the western shores of the Red Sea, and has garrisoned Masowah, which is but a few miles from the port in question, and draws a considerable revenue from it, it might be found difficult to silence the jealousy which the organisation of a rival establishment might create.

I have little doubt that every obstacle to any interference in the trade at Berbera,

would, in the first instance, be thrown in our way by the Banians; but all this might be easily arranged by having an armed vessel there for the first few seasons, until by means of sensible agents, in whose hands the whole traffic, in the first instance, should be placed, the attention of the natives could be drawn to the greater advantages they would derive from a more equitable system, and mutual confidence should be established.

The prospective advantages which would attend the opening of a communication by means of Berbera, not only with Abyssinia, but also with the interior of Africa, are so great, that, having every chance of success on our side, the strongest inducements are held out for our making the attempt. At all events, it has, in my eyes, enough of superiority over Lord Valentia's scheme (which experience has proved impracticable) to authorise my submitting the above suggestions for consideration*.

* From information which I acquired in the Red Sea, I have reason to believe there is a fair chance from this point of a traveller's reaching the sources of the Nile and, possibly with a caravan, Interior Africa. Had I not proceeded to Arabia, it was my intention to have made the attempt.

CHAPTER XIX.

OBSERVATIONS ON SOUTHERN ARABIA.

Cape Aden—Author's Visit to—Appearance from the Sea—Fortifications—Ancient condition—Unsuccessful Expedition of Albuquerque—Decline of Aden—Commerce—Ancient Appellation of Aden—Sirah—Ancient Harbour and Remains of City—Minarets—Decay—Ornamental Architecture—Fortifications—Enormous Guns—Interesting Anecdote of Sultan Mahassan—Baths—Reservoirs—Ancient Population—Cemeteries—Modern Census—Commerce—Banians—Jews—Domestic Furniture—Children—Jewish Artisans—Schools—Foreign trade—Revenue.

When the high land which forms Cape Aden is approached from the eastward, the low isthmus which connects it with the main cannot at first be perceived, and it consequently presents the appearance of an island situated at a considerable distance from the Arabian continent. Thus it showed itself to us early, when, on the morning of the 17th

of February, 1835, we were rapidly approaching its eastern harbour with a fresh breeze. The outline is very rugged, being broken at the upper part into sharp and pointed peaks, the faces and sides of which are crossed by horizontal ledges of a darker hue, intersected at right angles by patches and streaks of a lighter grey, and the clouds over their summits gave to the whole a sombre and gloomy appearance. The fortifications on the small island of Sírah, the turrets on the pinnacles of the mountains over the town, and the town itself, were successively brought into view, and shortly before noon we anchored within the inner harbour. From this situation can be seen patches of masonry and half-ruined towers on the neighbouring ridges, which indicate the former existence of extensive walls. Large guns lie dismounted on the beach, and a few superb minarets still tower above the mounds of rubbish with which they are surrounded, recalling to the mind of the observer some idea of the former opulence and importance of this city.

Abulfeda notices Aden as forming in his

time a flourishing port*. In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries it maintained an extensive trade with India and China, and was then the entrepôt of the riches of the East; but it appears to have reached the height of its prosperity in the sixteenth century.

In order to maintain the trade against the Portuguese, who had lately made their appearance in India, Sultan Gury, the last Mameluke sovereign of Egypt, and Solyman the Magnificent, took possession of the various ports in Arabia. To dispossess them of these, a naval force was equipped in Europe, and placed under the orders of the celebrated Albuquerque, who, however, no sooner saw Aden than he perceived the difficulty of conducting any operations against it.

* It appears to have been known to the Greeks under the name of Arabia Felix, which it is thought was imposed by that people in consequence of its being the capital of a district to which they had applied the same appellation. Its inhabitants then secured an enormous profit by conveying in large vessels of their own construction the merchandise of India to Egypt; but some time after the direct passage from Egypt to India was discovered by the Ptolomies, one of the Roman emperors, in order to secure the monopoly to that province, caused Aden to be destroyed: at what time it was rebuilt I know not.

The result justified his anticipations, for he was eventually obliged to retire without having made any impression on it; but from this period we may date the decline of Aden. It owed its riches and importance to being the entrepôt of the Indian trade, so long as it flowed through Egypt into the cities of Venice and Genoa; but after the discovery of the passage round the Cape it fell to decay. Though its commerce had thus received its death blow, yet for some time afterwards it sustained a languid existence. Its merchants, enriched by their former gains, continued to reside there, and as the port of Yemen it still received some supplies. About the middle of the eighteenth century the Turks, having held possession for nearly a hundred years, were compelled to evacuate Yemen, and Aden again fell into the hands of its former masters.

It appears, therefore, that this city has been celebrated from the remotest period, on account of its commerce and its harbours. Whoever might have been the founder the site was happily selected, and well calculated, by its imposing appearance, not only to display the

splendour of its edifices, but also uniting strength with ornament, to sustain the character which it subsequently bore as the port and bulwark of Arabia Felix.

Aden, situated on the north side of a lofty promontory, is connected with the main by a very narrow isthmus, about two hundred yards in breadth. In an old map which I possess, a causeway connects the two, and I have little doubt that the former remained an island until a very late period.

The rocky islet of Sírah, marked in former maps as a "Fortified island," is separated from Aden by a shallow channel, about two hundred yards in width, which is dry at low water. The elevation of the highest point was estimated at six hundred feet. Of the wall and forts which formerly encompassed the summit, a single tower at the verge of the precipice now alone remains. In this the officer who has the charge of the port dues resides, and by his elevated situation is quickly enabled to distinguish and bring-to any boat that may attempt to evade them by sailing.

Extending from this islet to seaward there

is a short projecting point, which breaks the swell of the sea, and formerly rendered the space between it and the town well adapted for an inner harbour. Of this, all which at present remains is a narrow channel of deep water, close under the reef, only sufficiently capacious for seven or eight bágalás. The rest is entirely choked up with sand, which must have been accomplished very rapidly, for the head and stern of an old vessel, probably a Turkish galley, now just remain above the surface of the sand, in a spot where thirty years ago she is said to have laid at her anchor. The jetty at which, in the recollection of the older inhabitants, the largest boats discharged their cargoes at all seasons, cannot now be approached by the smallest at high water.

All that remains of the former city are a few minarets, about a hundred houses, and some disjointed remnants of its walls, the rest being occupied by tombs, mounds, and heaps of rubbish, roofless walls of older dwellings, or the wretched habitations of the present residents. The minarets are four in number, but two of them are in a very dila-

pidated and tottering state, and will not, in all probability, withstand another monsoon. They are handsome buildings, of octagonal figure, and about sixty feet in height; their summit adorned with a cupola, and their sides ornamented with various devices in relief; but the several mosques to which these were attached are now in ruins. One of them, called Shuma, was frequented until lately; but though the Muezzin's call is still heard every Friday from its minaret, the prayers of the faithful are offered up in a spacious shed contiguous to it. They are wholly constructed of burnt bricks or tiles. Within the enclosure is a well, which formerly supplied a fountain, the water of which is used by the Mussulmanns in their ablutions. All, however, has now gone to decay, and the once sacred spot has neither floor, roof, nor doors, and is filled with dirt and rubbish. The other minaret, still in tolerable repair, is situated near the Suk, or market-place, but its mosque is in an equally ruinous state. Of the houses which remain, a few only are now habitable; the most capacious and best preserved of

these being one which is occupied by Sultan Mahassan, when he resides in the town, and is similar in form and construction to the Turkish dwellings in Jiddah. There is the same profusion of ornamental woodwork about the windows: beams of timber traverse the walls, and sentences from the Koran are inscribed over the doors. The upper part of the walls is turreted, and various devices are also executed over or around the doors and windows, in the thick coating of cement with which the whole building has been covered, and which from the sea, when crested with the sombre hue of the surrounding mountains, must have produced a light and cheerful effect. The fortifications encircling the town, and the artillery with which they are mounted, were constructed and furnished by Sultan Selim. At the cost of immense labour, a wall has been carried, for an extent of about four miles, completely round the first ridge of mountains, which rise up over the town. Others are built along the heights on either side the pass; indeed most of the defiles through the mountains have been fortified, and on their

summits or pinnacles, at an elevation of one thousand two hundred feet, are seen turrets and watch-towers. On one lofty point to the eastward, they have even contrived to get an enormous gun, traversing on a swivel, which, considering the nature of the country, must have been a work of great labour. The town itself appears to have been walled only on the sea and western sides: it is with difficulty the foundations of the former can be traced, and the face of the latter is covered with a slope of sand reaching to its summit. The visiter suits his own convenience either in walking over this or entering through either of the miserable gates. One of these is dignified by the appellation of Bab el As, and, for form's sake, is generally kept closed. A battery formerly extended along the whole length of the sea-face; and here, mounted on rude and frail carriages, are still seen those enormous guns which have attracted the attention of travellers. They are pierced for a sixty or sixty-eight pound ball, and their dimensions are as follow: — length 17 feet 2 inches; circumference at the breech, 6 feet

2 inches; at the muzzle, 4 feet 4 inches. They are cast in brass, and almost covered with Turkish inscriptions. On the beach to the westward there are some equally large. I am surprised that the Arabs have not procured artificers from Egypt or India to cut them up, as they are now of no use, and the metal of which they are constructed is valuable. I mentioned this to Sultan Mahassan, but he replied with more feeling than could have been anticipated, that he was unwilling to deprive Aden of the only remaining symbol of its former greatness and strength. He was much pleased when I told him that the fame of those guns had reached England. Mohammed Ali, in whose breast no scruple of this kind ever entered, got a round sum by cutting up a gun of similar size, which had been left behind by the Turks at Jiddah, about the same period these were left here. That which would have proved the most efficient battery, and the most destructive to shipping approaching the harbour, was the one erected on the projecting point Sírah. From thirty to forty guns of

various calibre were formerly ranged here, but they now lie dismounted and neglected near their former embrasures. The iron guns have fallen to pieces from age, and the brass pieces only are in a condition to be used. Of the spacious and commodious baths, lined with jasper, and surmounted with domes, which are described in the voyage edited by Monsieur de la Roche, in 1707, not a vestige, as far as I could learn, now remains; nor have the oldest inhabitants any recollection of them. The natives conducted me to some reservoirs, constructed with much labour, at the lower termination of the valleys which lead from the neighbouring mountains, and which, in the winter season, form the beds of mountain torrents. They are of a semi-elliptical form, the largest measuring sixty-eight feet in length, and twenty feet deep. They are of solid masonry, supported on the outer side by buttresses, and lined within by flights of steps, in the same manner as may be observed in those of India, which are built on the banks of rivers. I was assured some of these edifices were formerly

used as bathing places, whilst others are kept as reservoirs. The water procured from the wells in the plains appeared very good, but the natives say it is heavy, and if used for any length of time, produces flatulence and indigestion.

Abundant evidence is afforded of the former populousness of this city in the number and extent of the burying places. These are situated in various quarters: the Turkish cemetery, the largest, extends in a broad line from the Shuma mosque to the tomb of Sheïkh Eïdrúse. Many turbaned pillars of fine marble, very beautifully ornamented, still remain; but the greater number are broken down and destroyed, most probably by the Arabs, who still cherish the most bitter hatred against their former masters. In the seventeenth century Aden contained thirty thousand inhabitants; its port was filled with ships freighted with the precious merchandise of the East; and the city was adorned with spacious and stately edifices, which were well calculated to impress the mind of the traveller with a just conception of its splen-

dour and magnificence: but these have now all passed away; its commerce has departed; its harbours are almost empty; the city deserted; and we may exclaim, as of Tyre, in the language of the prophet, "How are the mighty fallen!" The present inhabitants do not exceed eight hundred, the descendants of Arabs, Súmálís, and the offspring of slaves; but not a Turk now remains in the town; nor could I trace any resemblance in feature or figure to their former masters. They live principally in huts built on the ruins of the former city, the frame-work of which is formed by poles fastened together and covered over with mats. Not more than twenty families are now engaged in mercantile pursuits; the rest gaining a miserable existence either by supplying the Hajj boats with wood and water, or by fishing. A few Banians also reside at, and monopolise the greater part of the trade. They live in good houses, substantially built, and exercise considerable authority in the town.

But the most interesting portion of the population of Aden consists of about two hundred

and fifty or three hundred Jews, who, with their wives and families, occupy a separate quarter. Their huts are constructed in the same manner as those of the Arabs; and though the spaces around appear very filthy, the interior of several wore an air of neatness and comfort, not to be found in those of the former. The floor is matted; they have tables and chairs; and, in some which I entered, I observed plates, spoons, knives, and forks. They sleep on mattresses stuffed with a description of soft grass, and covered with a counterpane of coloured cotton. In their persons, they are usually tall, retaining the cast of features by which they are distinguished in other parts of the world. The children are very fair, and several struck me as being exceedingly handsome. They have dark, expressive eyes, coral lips, pearly teeth, and even rosy cheeks; but do not retain their good looks as they advance in years; while many of the old women who crawl along the streets appear squalid, and half famished.

The Jews are not allowed to enter as soldiers, but are very useful as artisans. They make silver ear-rings and ornaments for their

females, and are the porters and the bricklayers of this town and Láhedsje. A few of their number distil an intoxicating liquor from raisins, which the Arabs consume in great quantities. Grain, and a few trifling articles, are sold by them in their own houses: some catch fish along the beach with nets, and bring them to the tank for sale; but none, as at Mokhá, go to sea in boats for this purpose. Within their village they have a small synagogue and two schools, in which their children are instructed in reading, writing, and a knowledge of the Hebrew language: they write on a wooden tablet with red chalk. Their mode of recitation seemed, to us at least, singular; every individual calling out the passage he is acquiring a knowledge of, to the utmost extent of his voice; and in as mall room filled with thirty or forty boys, the effects of such a Babel may readily be conceived. I observed that the master paraded the room with a whip in his hand to punish the negligent or refractory.

Attracted by the excellence of its harbours, which are undoubtedly the best in all Arabia, Aden is still visited by several vessels, par-

ticularly from the Súmálí ports of Berbera and Bunder Kassim; which are so situated with regard to this port, that their boats cross over at either season with a fair wind. In addition to the articles I have specified in my account of Berbera, they bring rafters for building houses, bullocks' fat, which the natives melt down and use as a substitute for ghí, camels and sheep; the returns are rice, tobacco, blue cloth: twenty or thirty yards of the latter are purchased for a dollar, and sell again in their own country for treble that sum. The Súmálís have little to do with the trade beyond conveying the merchandise; a Banian residing at either port, to whom it is respectively consigned; but as the religious principles of this class forbid their dealing in animals, the Súmálís retain the sale of their sheep, which arrive in great numbers at all seasons, from the ports of the African to those of the Arabian shore. They do not permit the Arab boats to engage in this trade, which is very lucrative, it being calculated that not less than ten thousand are received annually. Their price varies according to the season: in the south-west monsoon,

when the passage is boisterous, and during the heats, they sell for one and a half, and two dollars each; but at one, and never beyond one and a half at most other seasons.

The Súmálís' boats are about fifty tons: they are much hardier navigators than the Arabs, and frequently put to sea, stretching boldly across to the Arabian shore, when the natives are afraid to creep along their own coast. The articles which I have enumerated as being exchanged with the Súmálís, comprehend all that can be obtained in Aden. They are brought by the Hajj boats, which touch here in their passage along the coast, to fill up their wood and water. The latter is plentiful and cheap: the Arabs bring it in skins from some wells about half a mile from the beach.

A duty of two and a half per cent. on all exports and imports, and a small harbour due, is all that is exacted from boats touching here; but a trifling present is expected by the Dowlah. The person at present filling this office is a clever, hospitable man, and exceedingly attentive to Europeans. He holds

his situation under Sultan Mahassan, the chief of the territory to which Aden gives its name. Although this chief occasionally resides here for some weeks, he generally remains for the greater part of the year at Láhedsje.

Surrounded as Aden is by a semicircle of hills, without any running water, and destitute of vegetation or trees of any kind, the heat would be very great, were it not tempered by refreshing sea breezes.

The tomb of Sheïkh Eïdrúse, though now fallen to decay, must have been formerly a fine building. It is of considerable size, surmounted by a dome, and surrounded with a colonnade. Between the columns and the body of the building there are several graves, to which little attention is now paid, the whole space being filled with dirt and rubbish. You enter the interior of the building by a noble door, completely covered with sentences from the Koran, tastefully cut in the wood with much labour. Tradition says these were executed at Surat, and being cast into the sea, were drifted by the current to their desti-

nation. Under the centre of the cupola the body of the Sheïkh lies interred; and his descendants, to the number of five, are placed on either side of him.

CHAPTER XX.

Sultan Mahassan—Invitation from—Journey—Curious Rocky Landscape—Fortified Ravine—Back Bay—Bridges—Animated Scene—Docility of the Camel—Tomb—Arab Devotion—Arrive at Láhedsje—Sultan's Palace—A Guard-room—Reception—Dinner—An Alarm—Irruption of the Futhális—Appearance of the Town—Population—Markets—Native Character—Oasis—Barrenness of the Vicinity—Irrigation—Resemblance to Egypt—Unsettled State of the Country—Interview with the Sultan—Personal Appearance—Authority—Manufactures of Láhedsje.

ADEN, and a small district contiguous to it, is subject to the rule of Sultan Mahassan; an independent chief, who resides at Láhedsje, a town situated twenty-eight miles to the north-east of that port. The road had for a long time been so infested by flying parties of the Futhális, that no one, unless with an escort, would attempt the passage. It was, therefore, with no small satisfaction, that one morning, while on a visit to the Dowlah, I learnt that Sultan Mahassan had

sent an express to Aden, requesting to see me; and desiring, if willing, that I should accompany a large cafila, which was to leave the town on the following day. On the morning of the 5th of March we mounted our camels, and set forward. Our route, after leading over and between several mounds, containing the ruins of the suburbs of the former city, extended in a north-west direction along a broad valley, which terminated at the distance of a mile from the town, in a narrow defile. The sandstone rocks on either side have an extraordinary appearance. They expose alternately red, purple, or yellow streaks, extending in nearly a vertical direction, and exhibiting, by the brightness and variety of their colouring, a singular contrast to the sombre hue of the limestone by which they were surrounded. Ascending by a steep and rocky road, for about four hundred feet, we arrived at a spot where the first gate has been placed. Near to this, the natural limits of the ravine are so contracted, that they have been widened by art, the marks of the chisels still remaining on the face of the rock. An abutment of masonry on either side, and

some fragments of wood and stone, are all that now remain of this barrier: a few yards beyond, we arrived at the termination of the defile, which is blocked up by a square tower, where, as this pass commands the only approach to the town on the land side, a guard is constantly stationed. Like the rest of the fortifications, it is of Turkish erection, and like them, has fallen sadly to decay. On the roof, two small pieces of artillery are planted. After passing through this tower, we obtain a splendid view of Back Bay, which resembles an extensive lake, studded with dark, rocky islets. We next descended by a steep road to the hollow which skirts its limits, after passing the ruins of a custom-house, and a few yards beyond it, a Sheïkh's tomb, the interior of which is concealed from view by a screen.

The greater number of the camels had now assembled, and we continued our journey without any order or arrangement. As far as the eye could reach, nothing but a dead level flat, without any signs of vegetable life, presented itself. Over several branches of the sea narrow bridges have

been thrown, the piers of which alone remain. The upper part of these has fallen in, and is replaced by rafters covered with mats and about a foot of soil. They bent so much with the weight of the camels, that I hardly expected the cafila could cross without some accident; but the Arabs take these things very coolly. If one break down, the caravans continue to fetch a long circuit, until the Sultan sends some one to repair it. Small bushes soon began to appear, and apprehensions of the Fúthalis kept our party on the alert. It is an animating sight to observe a body of thirty or forty Bedowins scouring across the plain on either hand, their long hair floating in the wind, shouting the war song of their tribe, or discharging their matchlocks as they wheel around. Until I had seen the magnificent manner in which these men manœuvre their camels, I knew not what the animal was capable of. They are stopped as suddenly, turned, and in fact kept under as complete command as a horse. The pace of the animals I have seen in the Hejáz, the peninsula of Sinaï, and Egypt, when

at speed, is but a shuffling trot, which rarely exceeds from six to eight miles an hour: they carry their heads close to the ground, and have altogether a tame and spiritless appearance; but the camel of Yemen, as of Omán, bears its head erect, and throws out its legs with as much freedom and boldness as a horse, and its progress, at what appears its natural pace, cannot be less than twelve or fourteen miles an hour, for they kept our horses at a hand gallop. The rider sits across the animal's shoulders, his right foot placed on the neck, with which he urges him to speed. Independent of the halter, which is merely fastened round the jaw, the guide has also a string attached to the cartilage of the nostril, which, however, is only used to restrain the animal when restive.

About eight miles from Aden, we halted for a short time to partake of some coffee at the tomb of Sheïkh Osman. It is a singular-looking building of a square form, its roof being composed of a number of small cupolas, ranged in parallel lines, with a large dome in the centre, over the sacred spot which contains the remains of the Sheïkh.

The water in its vicinity is brackish and bitter.

With their heads reclining on the red cloth, with which the grave is covered, our guides muttered their prayers; they then pressed the corner to their lips, and passed their hands over the covering, as if to collect the dust, which they applied to their heads and breasts.

Beyond Sheïkh Osman the road enters amidst high sandy downs, covered with trees, and at half-past seven we halted close to the town of Lahedsje, our guides firing their muskets as a signal of our approach: a few minutes afterwards we arrived at the Sultan's palace. Passing through a small wicket, we entered a spacious hall, dimly lighted by a few solitary lamps, and nearly filled with armed Bedowins: around its walls, spears, shields, swords, and matchlocks were suspended. Here, after a few minutes' detention, we were conducted through a variety of spacious rooms and narrow passages, and found the Sultan reclining on a couch in the corner of a very small apartment. From

the centre a lamp was suspended, while the slaves standing around bore in their hands long tapers of lighted wood. Pleading indisposition, the Sultan did not rise, but directed a meal to be prepared for me, consisting of fried pancakes, lumps of grilled meat, melted ghí, and huge dishes of rice, all placed on small circular mats. After partaking of this, I was shown into a small house, which had been prepared for my reception.

Fears of the approach of the Fúthalis kept the whole town awake, and there was every description of noise which can be conceived. The guard, as they parade the streets, in order to show they are awake, continue firing their matchlocks. A party stationed under our windows for our especial protection continued to beguile their watch with singing to the utmost extent of their voices, and at midnight, when they got hoarse and sleepy, they were relieved by a fresh set, who commenced again with delightful vigour, and continued until sunrise. If we add to these the clamorous voices of females, heard in every direction, the unintermitted yelling

of dogs, the braying of asses, the roaring of camels, and the cries of legions of cats, it will not be an object of much surprise that I obtained but little sleep during my stay in Lahedsje. In spite of their watchfulness, the Fúthalis, on the second night, contrived to enter the town in the quarter opposite to where we were residing. They burned several houses, and effected a safe retreat with a considerable booty.

In its general aspect, Lahedsje differs but little from most other Arabian towns. It stands on a considerable extent of ground; but large spaces are left wholly unoccupied, while others serve as a receptacle for rubbish and filth. The houses also are straggling, and in point of stability far inferior to those of Makullah or Shahír. The huts constructed from the stalk of the tám (*Holcus sorghum*) are usually of a conical form, with no other aperture than the door, and have a wretched and unsightly appearance. The former I estimated at four hundred, and the latter at about double that number. Occupying these, exclusive of women and children,

there are about five thousand inhabitants, of which a third are troops. A considerable intercourse is still maintained between Sana and Lahedsje.

Markets are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the Bedowins arrive in great numbers from the interior, and exchange their ghí, frankincense, and milk, for grain and clothes. There are not, however, any rich capitalists in the town, though almost every individual engages in commercial pursuits. They bear a fair character, and being of the Zeïdí sect, are far more tolerant than some of their neighbours. I was assured that, wearing the costume of an European, a traveller might proceed without risk from this town to Sana.

Lahedsje, similar to many other spots I subsequently visited on the Tehama, is situated in an oasis, and though nothing can exceed in barrenness the sandy desert which borders on it, within its limits several kinds of grain, fruit, and vegetables are reared. The ground is watered either by the mountain streams which pass through it, or numerous

artificial rills leading from them: others are fed by wells of most excellent water, about fifteen feet in depth *.

I was forcibly struck with the resemblance which the country bears to Egypt. There is the same clearness and purity of atmosphere, the same rich soil and verdure, the same lonely groups of palms, the same desert margin: still, to complete the picture, we want the humble Fellah and mighty Nile. Here every man's hand was armed for strife: the husbandman carries with him to his labour his matchlock and his spear; and though his habitation is on the ground which he tills, he fears to occupy it, and at the approach of night seeks shelter with his family within the town.

The Sultan had been desirous to see me, in order to ascertain if we were disposed to aid him in his operations against the Fúthalis.

* Niebuhr describes a river running past this town, which geographers, sceptical of its existence, have now omitted; but that learned traveller was perfectly correct. It rises near Ab and Jobba, and discharges its waters into the sea at Sheïkh Ahmed, five miles to the westward of Aden. Another branch, in the rainy season, reaches Shugra.

He seemed very desirous to establish a more extended commercial intercourse between India and Aden, and produced the treaty which his predecessor had, with the same view, entered into with Sir Home Popham; but during his lifetime it is not likely this will ever be effected.

Sultan Mahassan is about seventy years of age, low of stature, of a corpulent habit, and a grave and saturnine disposition; and it might easily be perceived that he was greatly feared by all around him. The predominant feature in his character is avarice. His uncle Ahmed, from whom he inherited the greater part of the treasure he now possesses, is described to have been the bravest and the most politic of the chiefs of Yemen. He encouraged commerce, invited merchants from India and Egypt to reside in his territories, had a well-organised body of troops at his disposal, and Aden then bid fair to recover some portion of its lost importance; but Sultan Mahassan in nowise resembles him: from the time he first assumed the government until the present hour, his time has been

wasted in useless disputes with the neighbouring tribes; and, not content with the treasure amassed by his predecessor, he continued, under various pretences, to extort money from different individuals, until they fled from his dominions to avoid his arbitrary exactions, and Aden has gradually fallen into its present miserable state. A great many of the foreign articles consumed at Lahedsje, instead of coming from Aden, are even brought round by the way of Sana from Mokhá. Sultan Mahassan's career has, however, nearly ended: his enemies, before we left the coast, had sacked Aden; and the neighbouring tribes will not now cease from annoying him, until they possess themselves of a considerable share of that wealth which he has so disreputably acquired.

Manufactures of all kinds are scarce at Yemen; but at Lahedsje I saw about thirty silk weavers at work. The yarn is received from India, and the colours are good.

CHAPTER XXI.

Shugra—Coffee Trade—Exposal of Property—Severe punishment of Theft—Sultan Ahmed—Fúthali Arabs—Infanticide—Reïmus—El Imshop—Tribes of Jaffa—Howhar—Tenure of Land—Nassaub—Population—Troops—Arab Cavalry—Commerce of Howhar—Abundance of Fish—Broom—Climate—Produce—Water—Inhospitable to Strangers—Population—Produce.

QUITTING Aden and advancing to the eastward, we found no permanent stations along the coast until we arrived at Shugra, a small straggling hamlet consisting of about a hundred houses, and treble that number of huts. It derives its only importance from being the sea-port of the district of Jaffa. They have no warehouses, and the merchandise, as it arrives either from the bágalás which touch here, or from the interior, is lodged on the beach. Coffee, and madder in its unprepared state, called Fuah, appear to be the principal ex-

ports, and during our stay the former was two hundred per cent. cheaper than at Mokhá. In exchange for these, they receive grain and dates. Considering the loose character of the Arabs in this part, it was to me a subject of surprise that property should be exposed in the public way it is; but the present Sheïkh is inexorable in his punishment of robbers. An instance of his vengeance on an Arab, who was caught pilfering coffee from one of the bales, was related to me. He directed the offender's hand to be cut off, and to be inserted in the space he had cleared; the aperture was then closed, and the bale sent on to its destination.

When such instances occur, which are, however, rare, the culprit is usually detected by his footsteps, which are easily traced on the sand around.

Sultan Ahmed, the principal Sheïkh of the Fúthalis, usually resides here. He is a perfect Bedowin in his mode of living, character, and address; and the able manner in which he has conducted some late operations against the dominions of the Sultan of Aden has gained him, as a leader, great renown on the coast.

The Fúthalis are said to be quarrelsome and vindictive. I have very often heard it mentioned here and in other parts, that there is a small tribe in the vicinity of Shugra, the number of which is never known to exceed forty men; but whether they have recourse to infanticide, or how otherwise they dispose of their supernumerary offspring, I could not learn.

The principal places in the vicinity of Shugra, on the road to Jaffa, are Reïmus, one day's journey; a town containing about four hundred houses, and surrounded by numerous date plantations. El Imshop, two days, a large town; and Jaffa, from whence large quantities of coffee are brought. This appears the eastern limit of the coffee plantations. Jaffa is described to me as a hilly and elevated district, resembling Hydrámáut in extent, and in the number and distribution of the hamlets with which it is studded. Although the people appear for some time to have lost possession of the coast, yet the reigning families at Shaher and Maḳullah are of this stock, as are all the aristocracy or respectable families of the

same towns. This induced me to make some inquiries respecting the filiation of the tribe. The details are not very interesting; but as they are brief, I shall give them. There are six principal tribes in Jaffa, the Bareïki, the Beni Nayi, the Beni Dummirí, and the Kaseïdi, who reside in an extensive valley called Dumakub. Aly Ney, the Sheïkh of Shaher, is a Bareïki, the ancestor of Abdel Abib, at Makullah, a Kaseïdi; the other two reside in a separate portion of the district, and are called Beni Goseïdi and Mahudi. Jaffa would be well worth the attention of a traveller. Its inhabitants boast of having never been subdued, and their habits have in all probability remained unchanged from the earliest period. Such of its people as I fell in with appear to have reached a degree of politeness and civilisation beyond those of most other parts of Arabia.

The Jaffa and the Heshed and Bekeyl are the two most powerful tribes to the eastward of Sana. The former neither emigrate nor fight out of their own country; the latter do both: many of them proceed to India, and engage in the service of the native princes.

The principal occupation of the inhabitants of Jaffa is cultivating their coffee, wheat, Indian corn, and senna. If any attempt is made to invade or insult their territories, the people are collected by messengers, who go round and summon them to attend their Sheïkh on an appointed time. Though the Sheïkh has no regular troops, the number he can thus assemble is said to be ten thousand.

Howhar is situated but a short distance from the beach, and is, moreover, a town of considerable extent; yet it has not hitherto found any place in our maps. This may have arisen from its being partly hidden from the view of those who sail along the coast by a range of sand-hills, running parallel to the beach, and extending for some distance into the interior. Howhar lies five miles from the sea in a direct line. It occupies a considerable space of ground, but the number of houses does not exceed six hundred. These are scattered into groups or hamlets, some of which are picturesquely situated amidst groves and thickets of acacia, and nebek trees. The number of inhabitants was estimated at three thousand: they

are all permanent residents, being distinct from the Bedowins, and occupying themselves solely with agricultural pursuits. The tenûre by which they hold the land is in form similar to that in Omán. The lessee engages in time of war to accompany his sheïkh or lord in his expeditions, and in time of peace he furnishes him with a tithe of the produce of the soil. The most fertile part of the district, occupied by the Ourlgis, is an extensive valley, resembling in its general features those of Wádí Meïfah. A few of those who possess flocks send them at certain seasons for pasturage to the desert on either hand, but the greater number are fed here. During rains it is filled by a broad but shallow stream, and several pools were found still remaining near the sea-beach.

My inquiries do not enable me to speak with confidence of any part of this valley beyond the village or town of 'Nassaub, which is described as being distant seven days from the coast. Abundant evidence is afforded by the quantity of grain, that the whole intervening country is highly cultivated, and supports, in scattered villages, a

numerous population, well supplied with all the common necessaries of life. I have given the number of the tribes at seven thousand men, of whom at least two thousand matchlocks obey the summons of their sheïkhs, in conformity with the military tenure by which, as I have already explained, their lands are held. During this period they receive neither pay nor arms, but are liberally supplied with ammunition. In addition to his infantry, Sultan Nasser can mount five hundred Bedowins on horseback, which gives him a great advantage over the neighbouring tribes, who possess no cavalry. At the head of these, a few years ago, he made a dash in open daylight into the town of Shugra, which he sacked and burnt, and was in full retreat before any of the Fúthali tribe, who were in the neighbourhood, could be assembled to oppose him. These cavalry have contributed not a little to deter the hostile neighbours with which he is surrounded from molesting him. The horses, though small, are finely formed, and are said to be capable of enduring amazing fatigue. Bullocks, sheep, and asses are also numerous and good, in their several kinds.

Howhar possesses no bágalás, and the only commercial intercourse the inhabitants engage in is the exchange of their surplus grain for dates, clothes, spices, &c., which are brought annually in about twenty boats from the eastern ports. A considerable quantity of coffee from Shugra is also landed here. Fish on this part of the coast is very plentiful.

Gúbut Brém, from the circumstance of its affording shelter in the south-west monsoon, has long been known to Arab navigators. Boats arriving thus far, late on their passage from the Red Sea, which are apprehensive of encountering the strong gales of that season, frequently put in there, and remain for the fair season. As there is neither danger nor difficulty in approaching the harbour, which affords facilities of ingress and egress, the knowledge of its existence may hereafter prove of service to vessels on the coast*.

There is a small village and date-grove bearing the same name as the port. The village is built at the gorge of a pass, extending for some distance into the interior, and

* Latitude 14° 20′ 40″ N. Longitude 49° 2′ 50″ E.

being open only on the sea side, the atmosphere is very confined, and the heat great. This tends to ripen the dates, but its effects are very visible in the emaciated forms of the inhabitants. Fresh water abounds here, flowing along in some places in rills; in others it is preserved in holes, about two feet deep. It appears to be of very good quality, and the inhabitants permitted us to fill up without making any demand. Unaccustomed to the sight of Europeans, their demeanour was yet extremely pleasing and inoffensive.

Fúah consists of about two hundred rudely constructed houses. The inhabitants are of the Biur Hassan tribe, and although close to Makullah, bear the character of being so inhospitable to strangers, that we were strongly advised by the Arabs not to land, unless with a party sufficiently strong to protect us from insult; and the reception one of the officers met with, who proceeded alone to the village, served to confirm this evil opinion. A considerable quantity of tobacco is grown in the vicinity.

CHAPTER XXII.

Hasan Gorâb—Ruins—Ascent of the Hill—Inscriptions—Ancient Fortress—Beni Gorâb—Makullah—General Appearance—Interior of the Houses—Population—Armourers—Smith's Forge—Market—Barber-Surgeons—Oil-Mills—Sûmâlis at Makullah—Sheïkh Mohammed—Indigo—Tobacco, &c.

On the morning of the 6th of May, 1834, we anchored in a short and narrow channel, joined on the one hand by a low rocky islet, and on the other by a lofty black-looking cliff, to which our pilots applied the designation of Hasan Gorâb. Some ruins having been perceived on the summit of the latter, shortly after our arrival I proceeded to the shore, for the purpose of examining them. To avoid the swell, which rolled along the opposite side of the island, and produced a considerable surf against the seaward front of the cliff, as it rose up per-

pendicularly from the sea, we pulled into a small bay on the north-east side, where the water was much smoother. Landing on a sandy belt, which extended from the margin of the sea to the base of the hill, we found ourselves amidst the ruins of numerous houses, walls, and towers. The former are small, of a square form, and have mostly four rooms on a single floor. The walls appear to have been carried along the face of the hill in parallel lines at different heights: several towers also occur at unequal distances. The hill at this side, for one-third of its height, ascends with a moderate acclivity, and along the slope the ruins are thickly scattered. There are, however, no apparent remains of public edifices, nor are there any traces of arches or columns. The whole are constructed of fragments detached from the rock, and from the several patches which remain it appears that they must have been covered with cement; but owing to the action of the weather, both this and the mortar have almost entirely disappeared. From the traces yet left on the beach the cement appears to have been obtained, as it is at present on

many parts of the Arabian coast, by the calcination of coral. Hasan Gorâb is about five hundred feet in height, and its basis is a dark, greyish-coloured, compact limestone. It appears to have been formerly insulated, although now connected to the main by a low sandy isthmus, blown up there by the violence of the south-westerly winds, and evidently of recent formation. The action of the sea might indeed be plainly traced in the cavities and hollows exhibited by a ridge of rocks now some distance from the water, but which, evidently at some no very remote period, must have been covered by it.

We had been vainly looking for a path by which we might ascend to the summit, but it appeared inaccessible on every side, and had almost given up our search, when it was suggested that the two towers which were standing by themselves, might possibly have commanded the approach and entrance to one. Scrambling, accordingly, over the ruins formed by the falling of the upper part of these, we at length discovered some faint traces of a track, which, in order to facilitate the ascent, had been cut along the face of

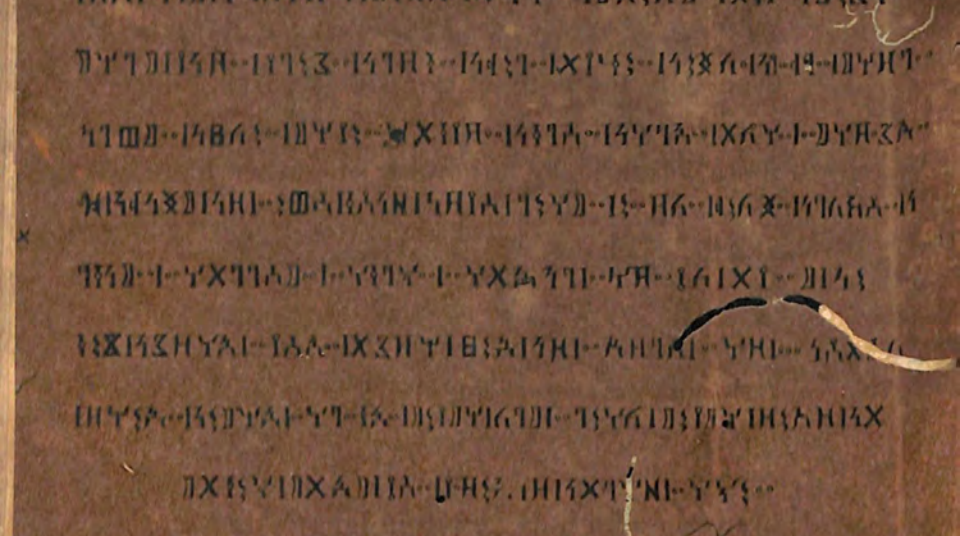
the hill in a zigzag direction; but beyond and above that, the cliff had been hewn away, so as to form a sort of terrace; and even here the path, at the widest part, would not admit of more than one abreast. As there was a steep precipice on either hand, above and below us, we did not find in those places where the rains had washed parts of it away a safe or pleasant route.

On the smooth face of the rock to the right, about one-third the ascent from the top, we were, however, rewarded by the discovery of some inscriptions. The characters are two and a half inches in length, and executed with much care and regularity. To avoid the possibility of omission or error, three separate copies were taken by different individuals, all which have been subsequently examined and compared *. Continuing our route from hence to the top of the hill, houses nearly as numerous as those below, walls and other defensive edifices, were perceived at various distances, scattered over its surface, and on the verge of the precipice,

* A fac-simile of this inscription appears in the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for 1834.

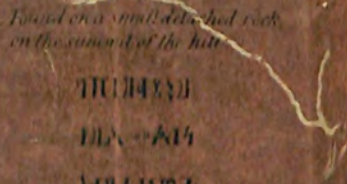
Inscriptions at Hasan Ghorab in Arabia

N°1 — Engraved on a smooth piece of rock forming one side of the terrace.

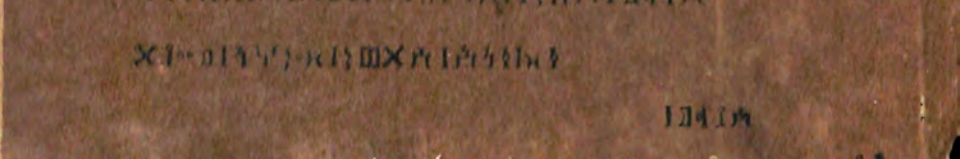


N°2 — Engraved on the upper surface of a stone close by the next three inscriptions.

N°3 — Found on a small detached rock on the summit of the hill.



N°4 — Found near the long inscription, lower down on the terrace.



a square tower of massive masonry. It probably once served both as a watch-tower and light-house, and may still be discerned for many miles to seaward. Some of the stairs are of very large dimensions; the windows and doors are plain, without arches. About one hundred yards from this tower the tanks are situated: they have been excavated with much labour out of the solid rock, and are cemented inside.

Having now surveyed every part of the hill, I could not but come to the conclusion, that it had been formed both by nature and art as a place of extraordinary strength. While the former had left it inaccessible at but one point, the latter had so fortified it in that quarter, that it would be impossible for the most daring courage or address to scale it. But, independent of this advantage, when we consider the lawless and barbarous character which the inhabitants of the coast have borne from the earliest periods, its insular situation must have rendered it invaluable, both as a safe retreat and as a magazine of trade; and, indeed, the circumstance of its possessing two harbours, affording an-

chorage in either monsoon, on a coast remarkably destitute of any so well sheltered, at least as far as our present knowledge extends, would appear to indicate great commercial importance. But it is to the inscriptions we must look for elucidation on this point, as well as the several others connected with it. My previous remarks on those discovered in the ruins of Nakab el Hajar will equally apply to those discovered here. There is so trifling a difference between the two, that I assign to them a common origin. I cannot, however, neglect to draw attention to the obvious and striking coincidence between the ports of Hasan Gorab, as deduced from our survey, and that specified by Arrian, two hundred and fifty miles, as the distance of the port of Cave Kanim, from that called Arabia Felix, which modern geographers, with much confidence, place at the present harbour of Aden. The natives possessed no information regarding the ruins, excepting that they had always heard them ascribed to the *Feringees.*

A tribe of Arabs, bearing the same name as the hill on which these ruins are situated,

the Beni Gorab, formerly possessed both the hill and neighbouring district.

The town of Makullah, situated in latitude 14° 31′ N., longitude 49° 13′ E., is built on a low projecting point, indented on two of its sides by small bays. Many of the houses, though far inferior to those of Jiddah and Mokhá, are lofty and substantial, and in their style of architecture strongly remind me of the Moorish edifices in Spain. Some of the best are wholly covered with cement, applied merely in broad bands, carried along at the same height as the windows, so that they have the dark appearance of ports in a ship's side. The doorways are so low that you require to stoop nearly double to pass through them: the staircases are dark and narrow, and the visitor feels his way in the best way he can to the upper part, where there is a second door, at which a Nubian boy usually officiates as janitor. The large houses have wells and tanks within their walls, with an enclosed space from thence to the upper part of the building, so that the inhabitant can at all times supply himself with water, independent of any assistance from below.

Loopholes for musketry occur at every story, and afford, with other indications, sufficient evidence to convince the visitor that these habitations have been constructed to serve, when occasion requires it, as places of refuge and defence.

On the slope which extends from the town to the neighbouring mountain there is a large suburb of native huts, the inhabitants of which are principally slaves, Súmális, and Arab mariners, in number exceeding those of the town. Collectively both may contain five thousand inhabitants. Their occupations are various: many engage in maritime pursuits, and a considerable number are employed in the commercial intercourse which is carried on between this town and the district of Hydrámáut, of which it may be considered the sea-port.

Close to the sea-beach there is a line of sheds, occupied by blacksmiths, who are principally natives of Zanzibar. Here spear-heads, the crooked knife or dagger called jambír, nails, &c., are made. The workmanship, though rude, is tolerably good. Some articles required for the vessel, which we

procured or repaired here, were considered more trustworthy than those obtained in India. They use charcoal for fuel. Two inflated skins, with a handle at the upper part, and a tube of iron projecting horizontally from the lower, serve them as bellows. These they work alternately in a vertical direction, so as to produce an almost constant current of air.

Following the sea-shore to the westward, we pass an open space, where fish and vegetables are exposed for sale, and then arrive at a line of huts, where butchers' meat, consisting of mutton and goats' flesh, but no beef (for, with the exception of some few belonging to the Banians, there are no bullocks at Makullah), is disposed of. Several barbers reside in this quarter, who, like those of a similar craft in England, until within the last half century, also officiate as surgeons. In the latter capacity their principal practice is confined to the actual cautery, letting blood, and cupping. Their mode of performing the latter operation is extremely simple and curious. The part being first scarified with a razor, they apply a cylindrical glass,

wide at the base, and terminating in a point, having a small aperture: to this the mouth of the practitioner is then applied, and after the air is exhausted by suction, the blood flows freely until it fills the glass; the operation being repeated as often as may be requisite.

Mills for expressing oil from the seeds of the *Sesamum orientale* are much used at Makullah. A cylinder, about seven feet in height, is traversed at the upper part, where it is somewhat widened, by a roller attached to a transverse beam turned by a camel, and as the former presses against the sides, the oil exudes, and is received in a basin placed beneath.

The inhabitants of Makullah and the other towns of Southern Arabia have few characteristics in common with those of Omán and the shores of the Red Sea. They are lean, very swarthy, and usually below the middle size. Their hair, instead of being shaven or plaited, either flows over their shoulders in curling ringlets, or is collected behind in a huge bunch, and covered with a leathern bag. The upper portion of their

dress consists of a short shirt, reaching no lower than the waist; their loins and thighs are covered with a blue wrapper of striped cotton, bound round by a broad leathern girdle, containing their pistols, besides a supply of powder in a huge flask, thickly studded with brass. In this belt they also carry their jambír or dagger, which has a silver sheath of a crooked form, the point being turned up, and elevated as high as the chin.

A great number of Súmális resort to Makullah, but do not permanently reside there. They are a fine race, easily recognised from all other classes by their martial bearing and appearance, for in general they are remarkably tall, a short person being rarely seen. Their limbs are clean and well made, their nose slightly aquiline; but otherwise their features are very regular, and expressive of that boldness and freedom which really belongs to the Súmáli character. Their skins are dark and glossy, and they have a custom of changing the colour of their hair from its natural blackness to an auburn tinge, by allowing it to remain for some hours plastered

with chinám. To what absurdities does not the caprice of fashion lead mankind! We have here an instance of the savage inhabitant of a barbarous coast acknowledging its sway with the same earnest devotion as the polished and refined native of civilised Europe! The Súmális profess to admire the English, but hate and contemn the Arabs.

But a few years since, it was by no means uncommon for the natives of these towns to seize and plunder boats and vessels passing along their shores, but the present constant communication renders such depredations impracticable. From being pirates, therefore their attention is now chiefly directed to commercial pursuits; and it is remarkable that, although disposed to pilfer from strangers, amidst themselves grave offences of a like character rarely occur; property being openly exposed in a manner that excites surprise in those accustomed to Indian and European towns. Offenders detected in theft have their heads shaved, and are paraded through the town to their prison mounted on asses. In cases of an aggravated nature, the offender is made to run the gauntlet

through a double line of his townsmen, who castigate him as he passes with a short cord. I once witnessed a case of mutilation for a similar offence. A Súmáli, who had purloined some silver ornaments, being sentenced to lose his hand, a slave, provided with a common knife, performed the office of executioner on the beach, in presence of the whole town.

Makullah has recently been engaged in one of those petty intestine broils, which in Arabia so frequently attend the succession to the government. The Bedowins called in to assist either party, kept up a constant firing at each other from the different parts of the town they had got possession of. At length the most influential individual was cut off by poison, and the present Sheïkh, Mohammed Ibn Abder Abib, became securely installed. During a residence of some weeks in Makullah, I saw much of this individual. His administration was good, and his very first measure evinced a mind superior to the short-sighted policy of most eastern rulers. He lowered the duties from ten to five per cent., and, in consequence, all those

who at other ports were compelled to pay the former, flocked to Makullah; so that, if Mohammed is spared, that town will soon enjoy a greater share of commerce than any intermediate port between Maskat and Mokhá. Although the government of Makullah has been hereditary in this family for several centuries, they have amassed no wealth, their only revenue arising from the customs, which amount annually to about ten thousand dollars. A few followers, principally Suhílí slaves, are retained around their persons, who also preserve order in the towns, but in other respects their manner of living is as simple as that of the private inhabitants. The room in which visitors are received contains no other furniture than a few old chairs; its walls are bare, and the floor covered with a tattered mat.

Makullah may be considered the port of Hydrámáût, and the imports are the same as those of Aden. Two kinds of frankincense are brought here for exportation to Hindustan; one called labán, from Hydrámáut, which is a powerful aromatic, used in their temples and houses for fumigation; the other

labán matí, less fragrant, but preferred for chewing. Several other kinds, such as the summer, kitád, and myrrh, together with sheep and poultry, are also brought from the Abyssinian shore. Tobacco, indigo, and wheat, arrive in large quantities from the interior; not less than five thousand bales of the former being annually exported, principally to the Suhílí coast. Owing, however, to an imperfect mode of cultivation, it is little esteemed in other places. One dollar for twenty pounds is the price at which tobacco sells at Makullah.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Analogy between the Commerce of Ancient and Modern India and Arabia—Trade and Trading Barks—Arab Compass—Anecdote—Fertile Valleys—Obstacles to reaching Hydrámáut—Signification of the Name—Extent—List of Towns—Population—Fertility—Grand Sheïkh—Warlike Character of Natives—Shaher—Fortifications—Prison—Mosques—Absence of Coffee-Houses.

From the earlier writers we learn, that in the communication between these ports and India, commerce first dawned; and though a scanty remnant alone survives, the subject is interesting; because the articles they bartered, and the line of route they pursued, are still unchanged, after the lapse of so many ages. Nay, even the very barks in which their merchandise is conveyed, have from a remote period undergone but small improvement.

From India they still receive nutmegs, pepper, "with the chief of all spices," together with silk in the yarn; but no longer "very much gold and precious stones*."

* 1 Kings x. 2.

Aden, Makullah, and Shaher, still employ about seventy vessels in this trade, some of which are two hundred tons. Departing from the Arabian ports in September, the larger class proceed to the eastward as far as Ras Farták, the smaller to Ras el Had; from thence they strike across, and make the coast of India about Porebunder: although every vessel carries a pilot, few have instruments, or are capable of making observations. I have, however, occasionally seen among them a rude description of astrolabe and cross staff. Some obtain the latitude with tolerable precision, but others, like the mariners of old, ascertain their approach to the Indian coast by the discoloration of the water, and the appearance of snakes.

The Arabians lay claim to the invention of the compass. If with reason, they have either sadly retrograded in that, as in many other things, or else they never advanced beyond the first and most inartificial principles of their construction. Those they use at present are altogether rude, and made in India expressly for the market. The needle is usually fixed, so as to allow for the varia-

tion, in one spot, say four degrees, but the same is used in some parts of India where it is scarcely sensible, and in the Red Sea, where it is eight or ten degrees; half a point, however, in this mode of navigation, is a trifle. Whilst I was at Socotra, a boat ran on shore, and was totally lost there, thinking herself on the African main. An Arab once brought a compass for one of our officers to look at, who, after examining it, used the Arabian word "cold" to imply its sluggishness; the man returned some time afterwards with a quantity of pepper-corns placed in the box beneath, for the purpose, as he observed, of warming it.

During the south-west monsoon, their vessels are either laid up, or employed in the Arabian and Persian Gulfs.

Barren as is the general aspect of the mountains which gird the sea-shore, yet fertile valleys occur amidst them. Of this description is Bákreïn, about three miles from Makullah, a steep glen, overshadowed by lofty date palms, with a rill of water flowing along its centre, and forming a chain of pools from whence the country around is irrigated.

For the first time during my sojourn in Arabia, I here saw the cocoa nut and cashew tree. The soil is a light-coloured, hard clay, but apparently very productive when well watered. There is a hot spring in this valley, in which the thermometer stood at 93° Fahrenheit. Water, for the consumption of the town, is also obtained from this neighbourhood.

The hills in the vicinity of Makullah are of secondary limestone, traversed by sandstone veins. The eminence surmounting the town is of a lighter colour than the surrounding mountains, and forms an excellent mark for distinguishing it from seaward.

From Makullah, I had the permission of Government to proceed, if practicable, to Hydrámáut, said to be five days distant. But even had the Sheïkh furnished me with guides, and given his consent, which, however, I could not prevail on him to do, the then unsettled state of the country presented an insuperable barrier to my progress. Banians formerly resided there, but none of late years have ventured to approach it. As the country is wholly unknown to Europeans, I

have subjoined some information I collected respecting it.

Hydrámáut, corrupted by Europeans from an Arabic word signifying " sudden death," is an extensive valley about sixty miles in length, running nearly parallel to the coast, and thickly studded with towns and villages. Of these, I insert a list, commencing with the most considerable on its western extremity.

Aïnan, a very ancient town, has some houses and public edifices. On a contiguous hill are inscriptions and rude traces of sculpture.

El Gotten, a collection of hamlets situated on the skirts, sides, and summit of a hill called El Had.

Shíbam, the supposed Saba of the ancients, erroneously placed in our maps nine days to the eastward of Shaher. The houses are numerous, but there are no huts. Shíbam is mentioned by several of the Arabian writers, and is a place of equal antiquity with Terím.

El Gofár is not very extensive, but has within it many Sheïkhs' tombs. Water may be obtained here by removing the sand with the hands to the depth of one or two feet.

Terîse. Rather larger than Aïnan. The Dawlah's house, remarkable for its size and strength, is situated on a hill impregnable to the attacks of Bedowins.

Scïyún. The largest of all these towns; it has walls, but no guns. Approached by a narrow defile.

Mádudí. Similar in size and appearance to Terîse.

Bor and Tierbí. Two towns situated close to each other.

El Gorfah. Situated near the foot of a hill, having a castle on its summit.

Towarí. A large town.

Aïrítha. Also similar in size to Terîse.

Thaïbi. Straggling hamlets, date-groves, &c.

Terím. The largest town in Yemen, is walled, has several gates, and contains some famous tombs.

Aïnad. The birth-place of Sheïkh Eydrúse of Aden; in size nearly equal to Terím.

Beled Nebí Hud. The birth-place of the celebrated prophet Nebí Hud.

I conclude this part of Arabia to be far better peopled than has hitherto been sup-

posed. The two towns of Aïnad and Terím are severally said to contain ten thousand inhabitants; and some of the others nearly an equal number. Few supplies intended for Hydrámáut are received at Makullah; and having hitherto regarded this country as a desert, we looked with surprise for the means by which its population could be supported: all this was, however, the result of misconception. Whole districts are described to me as rich in corn-fields and gardens; well watered, clothed with herbage, and adorned and shadowed with lofty and stately trees. A great number of Arabs, natives of this and the neighbouring province of Jaffá, rude from their native wilds, embark for India to push their fortunes in the service of the native princes, who highly esteem them for their bravery and devotion. It might be expected that many, tempted by the prospect of pay and other advantages, would also enter among the British troops; but either from disliking the severity of our discipline, or from some other cause, none have been found to do so.

The whole of this district is subjected to the sway of the Grand Sheïkh, Babak Ibn

Salím, to whom some of the towns on the coast also pay tribute. But his power, though established for so many ages, does not, on ordinary occasions, seem more extensive than that of other Sheïkhs.

The other sea-port of Hydrámáut is Shaher*, which has given its name to the surrounding district, extending about twenty miles on either side. It is built on a gentle slope close to the sea, and is the largest town on the coast. East and west, its length is about one mile and a quarter, and its width may be set down at half that extent. The Sheïkh's house, standing near the beach, is remarkable for nothing more than being more spacious than that of any private individual. Adjoining it is the prison, in which, at the period of my visit, several malefactors were confined. Mosques are very numerous at Shaher. The largest, like that of Aden, is dedicated to Sheïkh Eydrúse. An open space in front of the Sheïkh's house serves as a market, in which provisions and other commodities are daily exposed for sale. It is singular that

* Marco Paulo mentions this town under the name of Escier, but I am not aware that we have anywhere an account of it.

coffee-houses, so numerous in other parts of Arabia, are not found at Shaher, where the natives resort to each other's houses for the purpose of partaking of that bevèrage, it being considered indecorous to be seen doing so in public. In other respects, Shaher does not differ from Arabian towns in general.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Feast of the Aid—War Dance—Female Chastity—Smoking—Population described—Family Recollections of the Arabs—Emigration—Sheïkh Ali Ney—A Lawsuit—Tardy operation of British Justice—Riding on Horseback—Government—Natural Productions—Dragon's Blood Tree—Appearance—Singular formation of its Branches, &c.—Other remarkable Trees—Climate of Southern Arabia—South-West Monsoon—Dofár—Morebát—Kisín—Anecdote—Conclusion.

At the period of my visit, they were celebrating the feast of the "Aid," and all was gaiety. Every one wore shawls, and was clothed besides in the finest dress his means enabled him to procure, and some of the children were literally burdened with the weight of their silver ornaments. They have also a practice of staining their faces in devices similar to what we see tatooed on those of New Zealanders. Groups were assembled about the streets, within which, a number of Bedowins exhibited their war dance, exactly resembling that I have described in my

account of Omán. Female dancers, whose performance is similar to that of the licentious almás of Egypt, are also on these occasions freely admitted within their houses. Indeed, from what I have witnessed, and learn from the Arabs themselves, it is evident that female chastity has attained no very high standard in this part of Arabia.

The Arabs here are passionately fond of tobacco; and the first offering a host makes to his guest is a rude water-pipe, formed of a cocoa nut and short tube, which is passed round from one to the other, and smoked incessantly during the visit. Opium also, and the hemp seed are not unfrequently smoked until they produce intoxication. Throughout this part of the coast, the population is of varied origin; the higher and more aristocratic classes being descended from natives of Jaffa and Hydrámáut, and are remarkable for being much fairer than their neighbours. The remainder are descended from foreigners, who have settled here at different periods; all, however, preserve the recollection of their original descent. An Arab may forget, or be disinclined to tell his age, but he is never

ignorant of the stock from whence he sprang. This part of Arabia, by the same species of progressive emigration which I have described as existing in Omán, is constantly changing masters. But a few years since the Jaffaris possessed the whole coast; they were superseded by the Guthureïn, and they again by its present occupants.

Ali Ney, the Sheïkh of this town, is a good specimen of an Arab Chief. His character for probity stands so high, that difficult judicial cases which occur at a great distance amidst the Bedowins, are referred to his decision. Our officers were present one day when a complaint was brought before him that one man in the course of a quarrel had applied a grossly offensive epithet to the other. The charge was fully proved: "Bad words beget worse acts," observed Ali Ney; "let the defendant pay ten dollars. That," said he, turning to the officers, "is a somewhat quicker way than your Kádis in India would have despatched the business." His ideas of the tardy operation of British law were most probably collected from the Banians who reside here.

The custom of the town forbids any other person than the Sheïkh from riding on horseback through it, but this was dispensed with whenever we wished to make a short excursion into the country.

The government of this and other places on the coast is at present in the hands of certain dynasties or families, who may or may not belong to the stock over which they rule. The succession is nominally hereditary, but the order of primogeniture is not unfrequently set aside by some more powerful member of the same family. Upon the death of the old ruler several candidates usually appear, who contend for the prize until it is ascertained who is the stronger, and to him they all then quietly submit. Their power is so far absolute, that they are only controlled in its exercise by the influence of public opinion, for should the individual by his acts render himself especially obnoxious, another member of the family would not fail to take advantage of it to dispossess him.

The natural productions of this part of Arabia differ in but a trifling degree from those of Omán. On the mountains, dragons'

blood and incense trees are very numerous. I have often seen the former, but never could obtain a view of the latter, which is however described to me as growing on the most elevated hills in a barren soil where no other tree will thrive. A considerable quantity of the gum exudes naturally, but the process is also aided in some districts by making incisions in the trunk. I found the average height of the *Dracæna draco* to vary from eighteen to twenty feet, and its circumference from three to five. When young they have usually but one stem and no branches, the leaves being disposed in the form of a star round the upper part, but as they get older they may be seen with three, four, and even five stems. These branches consist of a number of elongated tubes, united together, but much contracted in size at their point of junction, which is so irregular that they usually appear awry. From the extremity of each branch a cluster of leaves rises perpendicularly, which are disposed in a circular form, radiating from the centre: they are sword-like and of a coriaceous nature, the outer being from ten

to fourteen inches in length, and measuring about two inches and a half at the base, where their breadth is somewhat extended. These are larger than the inner circles, and have also a less curvature. The branches are thickly interwoven in the most fantastic and tortuous shapes, but the foliage, assuming a more regular and better defined outline, rises in a semicircular shape over the summit. Their appearance at a distance is therefore that of an inverted cone, supported by a thin cylinder. The bark of the tree is of a lead colour; the wood soft and spongy, having thin longitudinal fibres extending along it; the roots spread very much, partially intersecting each other near the surface. Few of them extend to any depth, and like those of the tuk, or wild fig-tree, they may frequently be observed seeking sufficient nourishment from the soil lodged in the cavities in the rocks. The Arabs consider the tree to be of different sexes. The male, they say, produces no gum, which exudes so spontaneously from the female tree, that it does not appear necessary on any occasion to make incisions. As in Socotra, there are two spe-

cies, but that called moselle, of a dark crimson colour, is esteemed the best. Soon after the setting in of the south-west monsoon is considered to be the period most favourable for collecting it. Trees growing in the most elevated positions produce the greatest quantity, which does not agree with the received opinion of naturalists, viz., that a greater quantity of gum exudes in a hot than a cold temperature.

I have been the more minute in my account of this production, because botanists appear undecided as to the particular tree which produces this *sanguis draconis* in the East. Two very singular trees, found also in Socotra, are met with on this coast. Both grow in very rocky places, and derive nourishment from the soil lodged in cells and cavities of the limestone hills. The whole diameter of their trunks consists of a soft white cellular substance, so easily cut through that we could divide the largest of them with a common knife. Camels feed on the leaves of one, but reject those of the other. A milk-white juice flows from the trunk and leaves of both, so acrid, that, if

applied to the eye, the pain is almost intolerable. Several stems branch forth from the same family of roots, and they mostly divide at a short distance from the ground into several branches. From the striking disparity which exists between their height and diameter, and the scantiness of their foliage, when compared with their bulk, they present the most singular and grotesque appearance; since many, not more than five feet high, cover at their base a greater extent in diameter. I was not sufficiently fortunate to see these trees in blossom, nor can I find any mention of them in works within my reach. The aloe grows on every part of the coast, and although I do not perceive it differs from that of Socotra, the Arabs rarely take the trouble to collect its juices.

Our own experience merely enables us to speak of the climate of Southern Arabia, in the north-east monsoon, which commences in the month of October, at first gently, and then increasing in strength by degrees until the middle of December, when it may be considered at its height. Afterwards its force gradually decreasing, takes off about the

middle of May. The weather is usually hazy, but neither heat nor cold so great as within the Arabian and Persian Gulfs. With the same local features as the shores of Hindustan, and with the monsoon blowing also directly on it, it is singular the plains of one country should be deluged with rain, while those of the other experience a cloudless sky, and suffer from parching heat.

It remains to notice Dofár, Morebát, and Kissín, rather because they have figured on our maps as large towns, than any other claim such miserable villages have in reality to notice. Dofár is situated beneath a lofty mountain; the country around is well cultivated, and supplies of cattle and poultry may be obtained there. Morebát possesses a good harbour, but the inhabitants in its neighbourhood are wild and inhospitable: a few years ago they slew the celebrated Pirate Sayid Mohammed Akíl, who had constructed a fort and taken up his residence here. The few remaining houses at Kissín are half buried in sand driven there by winds from the desert. I visited its Sheïkh, Omár Ibn Tuárí, styled by ancient writers "King of Furták," in

order to make arrangements respecting a sum of money our government had resolved to offer him for ceding to us the island of Socotra. Although possessing scarcely a shadow of authority, or even the means of procuring a scanty subsistence, the old Chief manifested a greatness of soul worthy an emperor. Perfectly blind from extreme age, he was led into the room by a little boy. After listening to my proposals with affected composure, when I had concluded, he sprang on his feet, and exclaimed with bitter energy, "Your Government wish to purchase Socotra, do they? Socotra! which for so many ages has been the heritage of my fathers? Never! Were they to heap this room with gold, they should not obtain a space equal to its floor's breadth."

When the British force landed there without his permission, he collected and headed a body of Bedowins, to cut them off, but want of money prevented his hiring vessels to carry them across the sea; he has, however, since seized on two vessels trading under the British flag.

Previously to this occurrence, several officers

at different periods had been despatched with instructions regarding Socotra. "The first person told me," said the plain-spoken old Sheïkh, "that he was the person chosen for this duty; another and another then came with the same tale—I believe you are all liars together."

To avoid swelling the bulk of these volumes, I have here given only the heads of the information I collected during my stay in Southern Arabia. The remaining observations will best accompany the map now in progress. When completed, it will fill up the most important blank which modern research has left unexplored, on the globe; and although the district to which I am at present alluding, is deficient in many of those storied recollections which invest the shores of the Red Sea, it has many spots which may also be considered as classic ground, and otherwise possesses lively claims to our attention. Here dwelt the noble tribes of Mahara, of Ad, and of Amelík; here at Hasek is the tomb of the prophet Hud, the fourth in descent from Shem, the son of Noah. At Aden, though miraculously hidden from view, the Arabian

poets have placed the city of Irán, with "its fine palace and delicious gardens;" and lastly, in Hydrámaut, flourished the kingdom of the Himyarític dynasty, whose dominion at one time extended to India, endured for two thousand years, and numbered among its illustrious monarchs, Solomon's cotemporary, the celebrated Queen Sheba.

APPENDIX TO VOL. II.

I.

The Route of the Pilgrims from Caïro to Mecca *.

The noble assemblage (mahhfil sheríf) having issued from Caïro (Misr) with great pomp, proceeds to the Birket-ël-hajj (pilgrims' pool), and thence to the Hid-fet-el-boweïb (hamlet of the little gate), a narrow place between two hills, with an elevation and a long hill on the right. Thence to

Hamrá (the red), where there are cisterns, and lodges (fiskíyeh), built for the use of the pilgrims. Thence to

Nakhíl ghánem (sheep-palm grove). Thence to

Birkeh 'Ajerúd (pool of 'Ajerúd), the first watering-place: its water is sweet, and sometimes is running through the valley. There is a khán (inn) there built by Kánsú Ghaúrí, and three lodges (fiskíyeh). It is opposite to the port of Suweïs (Suez), and in the same direction as the 'Ayún Músá† (springs of Moses). Thence to

* Given by Hájí Khalífeh, commonly called Kátib Chelebí in the Jihán-numá (*i.e.* Speculum Mundi), p. 541.

† On the road to Mount Sinaï.

Munserif (the divider), one day's journey. There are some pits there and vestiges, it is said, of excavations made in these places by certain kings for the purpose of joining the sea of Rúm (Mediterranean) with the sea of Suweïs (Red Sea). Thence to

Al Kubeïbát (the little domes). Here there are hills of sand like domes. This is the beginning of the desert (et-tíh) of the children of Israel; a widely-extended plain, forty farsangs in length and breadth, having Jebel Tór (Mount Sinaï) on the right, and Arísh on the left. Its roads are very difficult, and there is no water, from the cold in winter and the excessive heat in summer. Here the children of Israel were for forty years wandering about while they passed over a tract only two days' journey in extent. Thence to

Wast-et-tíh (mid-desert), or Raud-el-jemel (camel's garden). Thence to

Batn-nakhl (palm-vale), or Wádí tejr (merchant's dale), where there is a spring, a castle built by Kánsú, and a lodge (fiskíyeh) which encloses the well. The guards stationed in the castle keep the water from the Arabs. 'Alí Páshá, Beylerbey of Egypt, enlarged both of them. Thence to

Wádí-el-'ghaïmá (thirsty-valley). Thence to

Wádí-el-karíd (camel's ruminating valley). Then, after going down a declivity, to

Abyár-el-'alá (the exalted wells), a wide plain, where there are two wells; one called Bíreh, the other 'Alání. There is also a reservoir (haud) filled with rain-water, and in its neighbourhood is the Saltern, called 'Arákib* baghl (mule's muscles). Thence to

* Plural of 'urkúb, the tendo Achillis.

Rás-er-rekb (head of the camel-drivers). A place called Jifárát (the kids or the mounds) is in its neighbourhood.

Sat-h-el-'akabah (the plain, or the summit of the ascent), *i.e.* the 'Akabah (ascent) of Aïlah, where there was anciently a large town, now in ruins. In a low place near it there is a well lined with stone, the water of which is sweet, in a palm-grove. The Arabs settled there are of the tribe of Howeïtát.

The next station completes the first quarter of this route. Its water is sweet and plentiful. It all passes along the sea-shore. On the left * side is Mount Tór, stretching out for a space of several miles in extent. In the latter part of it there are two descents and narrow gorges (bógház), in which there are pits with wells of sweet water. Thence there is an ascent to the

Dhahr himár (ass's back), a rocky acclivity. Thence to

Jurfeïn (the two gullies). Thence to

Sherfehi Beni 'Atíyeh (the turret or watch-tower of the children of 'Atíyeh), where there is much wood. Thence to

Matlát (the salt slough), between two mountains. Here is the permanent abode of the Beni Lám. Thence to

Maghárehi Sho'aïb (the cave of Sho'aïb, father-in-law of Moses). There is sweet water in its pits, a palm-grove, and many ethl (tamarisk) and mokl (or dúm †) trees like those that grow near the river Nile.

* That is, going from Mecca to Caïro.

† Cucifera thebaïca, or bifurcate palm; the Palma Thebaïca of the ancients.

There are here also inscribed tablets on which the names of kings are engraven. Thence to

Kabr-et-tawáshí (the eunuch's grave). Thence to

'Uyún kasab (reed-springs). It is a watery, rushy, and excessively hot valley (wádí). In summer time many persons die there suddenly. The grave of the children of Abraham near the sea there, is a place of pilgrimage (ziyáreh). Thence to

Sherm (a creek), near the sea; on the left of it there is a mountain called Isháreh (the mark). Thence to

Mowílahh, on the sea-shore: there is water, but it is rancid. Thence to

Dár Ḳaït-Báï (Kaït Báï's house), so named from that Sultan having stopped there when performing the pilgrimage; before that they used to stop at Baṭn Kibrít (sulphur-belly), a narrow stony place. Thence to

Ḳabr Sheïkh el Kefáfí. Sheïkh el Kefáfí having been killed by a spear was buried there, and his grave is a place of pilgrimage. Thence to

Azlam (a very smooth arrow). The second quarter [of the whole distance] a salt, marshy place, without any herbage, and having water which is salt. In the midst of these mountains there is a desert plain (sahrá). Mecca senna is found here. Thence to

Simáḳ (Shumach), also called Rakhánín; it is a valley (wádí) in which there are many thorns. After passing it is

Iṣṭabil 'Antar (Antar's stable), an open plain among the mountains, where Arák [Avicennia tomentosa] is found, and on the borders of it there is sweet water. Thence to

Sherenbeh (the thick-pawed lion), a mountain-cape. Thence to

Wej-h (the face), a valley (wádí) in which there are wells of sweet water. They were renewed by Ibráhím Páshá, in the year 930 (A.D. 1524), and are supplied by rain and torrents. Thence to

Bír-el-karawí (villager's well). Thence to

Ḥarírch (milk porridge). Thence to

Ḥaurá (the bright-eyed girl), where there is water, but it is bitter. Thence to

'Aḳík (the torrent's bed). Thence to

Ṣaḥn (the bowl or dish), a circular place covered with white sand, and abounding in white vipers (afá'í). Thence to

Neb'án faḳḳá' (the bubbling spring), also called ḥijár (the stones), where there is sweet water. Thence to

Ṭarátír Rá'í (the shepherd's mitres). Thence to

Wádí-n-nár (fire-valley), a stony, sandy valley amid the mountains. This day's journey is known by the name of the seven rugged places (wa'r), because in it seven large rocks are crossed. Thence to

Ḥoseïrá (the little store-house or prison), a town in the territory of Yembo'. Thence to

Jebel Aḥmar (red mount). Thence to

Wádí Temá (vale of Temá). Thence to

Jebel-ez-zeïneh (mount Jewel), a place overlooking Yembo', to which the governor of that city comes, stops the bearer of sacred offerings, (maḥfili sherif), throws a carpet (sejjádeh) over the camel, and says a prayer, accompanied by two inflections of the body (rik'ah). Thence to

Yembu' (it bubbles up), where there are several springs. Thence to

'Ụdeïbíyah (probably 'Udheïbíyah, *i.e.* possessed of good water), a town so named. Thence to

Ewwel Dehná (the first plain), a town so called. Thence to

Wásit (the middlemost). At this station lamps are lighted, and cannon fired off. Thence to

Bedr [Ḥoneïn]. Thence to

Khabeb-el-bizzah (strips of cloth), an extensive plain. Thence to

Ghíḳ, a place on the sea-shore. Thence to

'Aḳabah Waddán (the ascent of Waddán). Thence to

Rábigh, the place where the ihrám is put on. In its neighbourhood is Johfah *, also called Muheï'ah †.

Here all the routes to Mecca, six days distant, unite.

The principal ancient towns between Aïlah and Jiddah are—

Ælath, Elath, or Ezion-Geber, 29° 30′ 58″ N., 35° 5′ E. (Rüppell.)

Madian at Mogháït Sho'aïb, 27° 40′ 21″ N., 35° 35′ E. (id.)

Raunath near Istabil 'Antar, Leuce Come (Albus Pagus), at Haurá. Jambia; Yambo', 24° 7′ 6″, 38° 27′ (De la Badía).

* Hajefeh, according to M. Bianchi (Recueil de Voy. ii. 153), but this is a strange oversight.

† This itinerary varies somewhat from that given by Burckhardt (Travels in Arabia, p. 455): it may also be considered as more complete.

Jathrippa; Yathrib, or Medínat-en-nabí (the prophet's city), 25° 13′ N., 40° 3′ E. (Jomard.)

Maco-raba, Mekkah, 21° 28′ 17″ N., 40° 15′ 9″ E. (De la Badía.)

Jiddah, 21° 28′ 56″ N., 39° 20′ E.

The data here given will show what approximation to accuracy was made before the survey by the Palinurus.

II.

Notes on a Collection of Plants transmitted by Lieut. J. R. Wellsted. By John Lindley, Esq., F.R.S., &c.

"The plants collected by Lieut. Wellsted are all from the Tehama, an unexplored tract between the peninsula of Sinaï and Yemen; bounded on the north by Rás Mohammed, and on the south by Jiddah. The collection does much credit to the industry and scientific devotion of this officer; but, as might be expected from the nature of the country explored, possesses little of novelty or importance. It is chiefly interesting as connecting the vegetation of Sinaï and Egypt with that of Arabia Felix.

"The whole tract to which the collection refers appears to be extremely sterile; with the exception of the *almond*, of which some specimens have been preserved, there is no species of any interest to man; nor is there any other tree whatever except the *Thuja orientalis*, of which some fragments have been sent home.

"In many respects the plants are the same as those of the peninsula of Sinaï,—*Fagonia cretica*, and another species, *Zygophyllum simplex*, *Statice acicularis*, *Astragalus hamosus*, *Iphiona scabra*, the plant called *Bovea* by Decaisne, and several species of Egyptian *Labiatæ*, forming some of its most remarkable features. It also comprehends one of our common dead nettles (*Lamium amplexicaule*).

"On the other hand, the *Lithospermum vestitum* of India, *Asphodelus fistulosus*—from which the *Asphodelus clavatus* of the Doab is not different, and which therefore extends from Malaga to India—*Acanthodium spicatum*, and *Cotula cinerea*, sufficiently indicate the approach of the Flora to a form more tropical than that of Egypt or Palestine.

"Besides these things, I find specimens of the *Inula odora* and *Convolvuius spinosus* of Yemen, both of which are unknown to the northward; and there is a species of bramble, probably the *Rubus fruticosus* of Forskahl, which although very incomplete, is to all appearance undescribed.

"The collection contains various other species, but as they do not bear upon any points of general interest, I forbear to enumerate them."—*Geographical Journal.*

III.

BAB EL MANDÚB.

It will be seen by a reference to the map, that those two great branches of the Indian Ocean, now designated the Red Sea and the Indian Gulf of Aden, lie at nearly right angles with respect to each other, and the point where the abrupt deflection takes place bears the name of Bab el Mandúb, "The Gate of Tears." This and several other names equally significant, were, it was thought, imposed by the earlier Arab navigators, to convey an impressive idea of their apprehension of the voyage before them: to this day they hold the passage in great dread, muttering in their progress many prayers, and casting loaves of bread into the sea. The same form is observed at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, and even on approaching certain harbours. No class of men relinquish old customs with more unwillingness than Arabs, and this custom is but a remnant of that universal superstition in which their Pagan ancestors, in common with the greater part of the world, were once enthralled. It doubtless arises from a desire to propitiate, by offerings of value or by invocation, the supposed evil agency of the spirits of the ocean. Jonah's immersion was, perhaps, but an exemplification of this principle.

Cape Bab el Mandúb* forms the terminating extremity of Southern Arabia; it is a lofty ridge of a triangular form, and at a distance appears like an island. The isthmus which connects it with the main is indeed very low, and the Arabs preserve a tradition that their barks formerly sailed over the space it now occupies. The port of Ocelis has been looked for on the western side of this Cape; a small harbour remains, but we discovered no ruins, or other traces of antiquity. The Johasmí pirates † formerly had stations in its vicinity, the ruins of which still remain. A line drawn from the Cape to the Abyssinian shores measures twenty-one miles, which is the least distance between the two continents; but this space is occupied with several islands.

The largest, Perim or Mayún, as it is called by the Arabs, is distant about two miles from the Arabian shore; the channel between them forming the lesser strait: it rises gradually from either extremity to the centre, where its elevation is about one hundred and fifty feet. The basis of the island is secondary limestone, but the whole surface is covered with masses of volcanic rock, and is withal so parched as not to afford, with the exception of Abysynthium and some scattered tufts of Salacorina, even the usual desert shrubs.

* This hill is called Jebel Fermise by the Indians. They have a tradition, that at one period it sent forth flames, which, judging from its conical and volcanic appearance, is extremely probable.

† I here take the opportunity of observing, that an historical account of this interesting, but ferocious and sanguinary race, is on the eve of publication by Captain Brucks, of the Indian Navy. Being aware of the circumstance, whilst preparing these volumes for the press, I forebore to swell them unnecessarily by more than a brief notice, already furnished to my readers.

No water is found, but it possesses a safe and capacious harbour; and a body of our troops, in 1801, were unfortunate enough to be stationed on it for some time.

Nearer the Abyssinian shore, and cropping out of the bank of soundings which connects the two continents, there is a group of islets, called by the English "Brothers," and by the Arabs, "Jezirat Subah," Seven Islets, equally sterile with Perim. Their only tenants are a few sea-fowl, and occasionally a turtle, which the Arabs do not eat, but kill for the sake of its shell. In their conical appearance, the basis of the rocks of which they are composed, the whole group varies but little: thin layers of limestone rear themselves, wrapped in curious folds, and containing fragments of quartz and felspar, together with larger masses, having fossil shells, coral, and other marine products embedded within them. A level circular belt of the same material, but considerably indurated by the action of the water, surrounds them; the outer portion is somewhat more elevated than that within, and is on a level with the surface of the water; beyond this it sinks perpendicularly to seven or eight feet. These islands have, without doubt, at some remote period, been upheaved from the bottom of the sea, but the coral and other marine exuvia are the same at every series of the strata. How were these supplied? By a submarine volcano?—if so, we must suppose the interval of time between each successive eruption was sufficient to have enabled those insects to recommence their labours in the vicinity of its crater. The interference of volcanic agency with the uprearing of coral banks

has recently found numerous advocates, and this fact is worthy their attention.

The shores on either side of the Gulf of Aden, as well as the islands contained within it, bear traces of having been subjected at no very distant period to a series of volcanic eruptions. These are more apparent near the entrance of the Red Sea; several volcanoes, there is reason to believe, were here once in active simultaneous operation; but one alone, Jebel Teïr, remains unextinguished. The craters of the others may be seen at Kotumbal, at one of these islands, and on the coast to the westward of Makullah, and at Mídan, where it is now converted into a deep circular lake. In some parts of this (the Arabian) coast blocks of lava are so thickly clustered, that they resemble mounds of ruins. In the north-east monsoon, every day brings a clear atmosphere and cloudless sky, and the appearance of such part of its shores as is thus covered, contrasts by its blackness, in a most remarkable manner, with the bright and glistening sand in which these masses are embedded.

An inequality in the height of the surface of the water at certain seasons in the Red Sea has long been known in Europe, and some occasional notices on the subject will be found in the course of this volume.

With a view to their continuation I was induced during my stay on these islands* to renew my observations under an impression that I should, at the entrance to the sea, trace a close connexion between

* I resided there three weeks, for the purpose of making astronomical observations.

the ingress and egress direction of the current, and the ebb and flow which I had observed at its extremity. It had appeared to me singular, that the absence of any apparent regular, not to say constant, current at the entrance, should hitherto have escaped notice; for in this respect it presents a singular exception to the indraught which is usually experienced at the entrance of inland seas; especially with those having narrow mouths. Dr. Halley was of opinion that the expense of water by evaporation was alone sufficient to account for the continued drain from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. The mean surface of the water in the Red Sea is not certainly equal to that of the Mediterranean; but to counterbalance this, the agents which produce this effect are more powerful in the latter than in the former. The theory advanced, is simply, that as the atmosphere over the land becomes considerably warmer than the sea during the day, a current of cooler air moves towards the shore, and then deposits its humidity either in dews or rains; and that a constant supply is necessary to fill up the deficiency thus drawn off. It will readily be believed that the burning deserts on either side of the Red Sea are well calculated to produce such effects. Rain is not indeed often met with, but the dews are so singularly copious, that in the vicinity of the land, I have known them to leave on our masts, sails, and rigging, all the effects of a smart shower.

I have elsewhere had occasion to remark that this irregularity appeared to be in a great measure influenced by the direction of the wind, which blows with much violence, though with great regularity, from dif-

ferent quarters, during nearly the same period, at either extremity of the sea. Thus, northerly winds may be considered to prevail throughout the year in the northern part; but during June, July, and August, they blow with the greatest violence, and then extend to, and even without the Straits; the water is then so low, that the reefs, which at other times are covered, appear three and four feet above the surface. In the southern portion, the southerly winds blow with an equal degree of regularity from November to June; although, when at their height, from November to January, they in a like manner blow home to Suez; and the water, to an equal degree, is found to be elevated. With a knowledge of these circumstances, I watched with some attention the direction and set of the current in the Straits, anticipating, that when it blew fresh out of the sea, the current would follow with rapidity in the same direction; that when the wind was moderate, it would be less sensible; and that when it fell calm, and light airs came from the south, &c., that the waters, by a kind of reaction, would flow back to fill up the space which had been left. To my surprise, however, I found they obeyed no such general law; but during my whole stay in the larger Straits, they flowed uniformly in one direction out of the sea to the eastward. Their velocity at times was upwards of three miles an hour. From these, and some other observations, made before and since, I am convinced, that not only the height of the water, but also the current, in the Red Sea, depend on, and are owing to the same cause—the strength and duration of the prevailing breezes: that when the water is at its highest (from November to

January) in Jiddah, that southerly winds prevent the escape of the superabundant water which, by the same agency, is poured in from the Gulf of Aden; but that when the north-westers exercise a similar influence to force them out of the sea, and they are aided by the quantity lost from evaporating causes, the effects are directly the reverse; and the reefs and rocks thus become laid bare*. That a considerable quantity of water which is carried through the larger Straits might return through the smaller, and along the Arabian and Abyssinian shores, is by no means uncertain; but the extreme inequality and variation in the set and direction of the tides, as well as rise and fall, render it difficult to arrive at any general conclusion. It is true, they ebb and flow with much velocity in the small Straits; that the period of each was nearly the same. I have known them at a short distance without, to the eastward, run for eight hours to the westward, and but two hours in a contrary direction. At the Brothers, I observed its rise and fall to be from five to seven feet, the night tides being the highest, without reference to the age of the moon; for it differed one day with another, sometimes two hours, and was as high at the moon's perigee as her apogee. Frequently, when it had ascended to what appeared high-water, and had even subsided and receded to some distance, it would again, under some new impulse, rise and flow over the former mark.

* Is it not owing to this inequality in the height of the water that the coral reefs in the Red Sea do not, as in other parts of the world, form islands? The labours of the lithophite tribe cease as soon as they approach the surface.

Within the Gulf of Aden the same winds produce effects directly contrary to those which I have remarked in the Red Sea. Thus, when the southerly winds force a superabundant supply into the Red Sea, the shores of the Gulf of Aden suffer a corresponding depression: and again, when north-westers prevail, the quantity the Gulf of Aden receives from the Red Sea causes it to rise in the same proportion. But these effects, I am told, do not extend beyond Makullah.

THE END.

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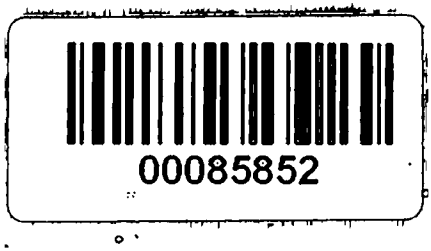
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